

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Inquiry Concerning Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability to All Americans in a Reasonable and Timely Fashion*; GN Docket No. 22-270, Seventeenth Section 706 Report Notice Of Inquiry (October 25, 2023).

I'm glad that with this *Notice* we begin the process to complete our statutorily required annual assessment concerning the "availability of advanced telecommunications capability to all Americans."¹ We last issued this Congressionally-mandated report in 2021,² and since then much has changed in the broadband marketplace. So, I support the *Notice's* proposal to update our broadband benchmark to 100 Mbps download speed and 20 Mbps upload speed to be responsive the current reality consumers encounter. In proposing to increase our broadband benchmark, we would establish a target that matches speeds now required in many of our Universal Service Fund programs,³ as well as those required in other federal broadband programs, including BEAD.⁴ The alternative is to retain a benchmark that was originally adopted in 2015,⁵ and that has been outdated for years.

I support seeking comment on the *Notice's* aspirational long-term speed goal of 1 gigabit download speed/500 Mbps upload speed. As innovation and technology continue to increase, including real-time use cases and new advances like telehealth and AI, we must set a long-term target that allows us and broadband providers to support the next breakthroughs in the future.

I am also pleased to see that this Notice considers adoption and affordability, which can go hand in hand. And to that end, this item has my full support.

¹ 47 U.S.C. § 1302(b).

² *Inquiry Concerning Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability to All Americans in a Reasonable and Timely Fashion*, GN Docket No. 20-269, Fourteenth Broadband Deployment Report, 36 FCC Rcd 836 (Jan. 19, 2021).

³ See e.g., *Connect America Fund: A National Broadband Plan for Our Future High-Cost Universal Service Support*, WC Docket 10-90 *et al.*, Report and Order, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, and Notice of Inquiry, FCC 23-60, para. 19 (July 23, 2023).

⁴ *Notice of Funding Opportunity*, Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program, National Telecommunications and Information Administration at 64 ("Funded Networks shall deliver Reliable Broadband Service with speeds of not less than 100 Mbps for downloads and 20 Mbps for uploads"), available at <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/BEAD%20NOFO.pdf>.

⁵ *Inquiry Concerning the Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability to All Americans in a Reasonable and Timely Fashion, and Possible Steps to Accelerate Such Deployment Pursuant to Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, as Amended by the Broadband Data Improvement Act*, GN Docket 14-126, 2015 Broadband Progress Report and Notice of Inquiry on Immediate Action to Accelerate Deployment, 30 FCC Rcd 1375, 1403, para. 25 (Jan. 29, 2015).