

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Modernizing and Expanding Access to the 70/80/90 GHz Bands*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, WT Docket No. 20-133 (January 24, 2024)

It doesn't seem that long ago that many of us were in lockdown, passing the time by making plans for post-pandemic life, including the places we would go and the friends and family we would visit. Now people across the country are flying again and in record numbers. In fact, last year, over 858 million passengers passed through our airports. That's an increase of nearly 100 million passengers from the year before.

Even before this surge in passengers, the demand for Wi-Fi in-flight often outstripped what many airlines could provide. The same was true for broadband connections onboard passenger ships like ferries and cruises. Connections while in transit fail consumers when too many passengers compete for the same signal and backhaul capacity struggles to keep up.

The good news is that we are taking steps today to keep us all connected—even at 30,000 feet in the air or miles out in the ocean. We are opening up underutilized spectrum in the 70, 80, and 90 GHz bands to provide more innovative ways to provide and use broadband in aviation and maritime settings. But that's not all. We are maximizing the use of these bands by allowing them to also be used for small, lower-cost antennas that can assist with 5G backhaul. So on top of expanding the opportunities for connection in transit, we are growing the opportunities for the use of these bands in places where other backhaul efforts have proved challenging. This approach is smart—because in our post-pandemic world we expect to be connected everywhere and our approach to airwaves like these must keep up.