

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

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)

In wireless, much of our recent attention appropriately has focused on mid-band spectrum. But over the long term, I wouldn't be surprised if the very short wavelengths all the way up in the 70/80/90 GHz bands also end up serving as a backbone of U.S. communications networks.

These bands are already being deployed on terra firma for 5G backhaul links that step in where carriers can't deploy fiber—and that perform well enough to ensure fiber backhaul isn't missed. Up in space, satellite operators see real potential for these bands to expand the capacity of our satellite broadband networks. And in the area in between, companies have been eyeing these bands to power faster and cheaper alternatives to satellite on planes, ships, and offshore platforms. All of this could translate into higher speeds, lower prices, and more choice for the everyday consumer, whether they're logging in from a city, suburb, or rural community or connecting to an in-flight Wi-Fi network on the go.

This item modernizes our rules to ensure that these services can develop and expand, and that's why I'm proud to support it. And while several steps remain for us, along with our federal partners, to stand up and fully implement the framework, I know that completing the job will remain a top priority. I'm especially glad that, as I urged, we made the framework more efficient for smaller innovators. There are so many important interests at play in these wireless proceedings, and that can make the regulatory process hard to navigate, especially for small businesses trying out something new. But our hard work can facilitate real progress and open up new possibilities for consumers.

I'd like to thank the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Office of Engineering and Technology, and staff elsewhere in the Commission who worked on this complex and cross-cutting item. It has my full support.