

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER OLIVIA TRUSTY**

Re: *Establishing the Digital Opportunity Data Collection; Modernizing the FCC Form 477 Data Program*, Report and Order, WC Docket Nos. 19-195, 11-10 (June 26, 2025).

Modern communications services allow Americans to participate fully in society and an ever-expanding global digital economy. Understanding where broadband is available and where it is not available across the country is an essential first step to connecting Americans to modern communications and enabling the Commission, states, local communities, and policymakers to target critical resources to communities that need it most.

In 2020, Congress passed the Broadband DATA Act, which required the Commission to adopt rules to collect broadband availability data from internet service providers, verify the data, and make it available to the public. In the years since, the Commission has undertaken the hard work to implement the Act, verify the accuracy of incoming data, and develop the Commission's very own National Broadband Map. One look at the map shows how far we've come since the days of Form 477, but given the iterative nature of the Broadband Data Collection or BDC, there is still work to be done to make sure the data remains as accurate and granular as possible.

The Commission's rules should ensure that providers submit accurate and verified BDC data, and in order for providers to submit accurate data they must be able to comply with our rules. Unfortunately, the current rule requiring a certified professional engineer to sign a provider's biannual BDC filing is both unworkable and impractical.

Many providers have reported they do not employ certified professional engineers (or PEs) on staff, and when they have tried to hire a PE for the sole purpose of certifying BDC filings, they've been met with a shortage of PEs in the marketplace.

Thankfully, today's item removes that unnecessary regulatory burden that could prevent the Commission from receiving timely, accurate broadband availability data, and replaces it with a more flexible approach that has been shown to work for providers. Importantly, the new standard adopted in today's item still ensures that providers have a trained, experienced engineer review and attest to the accuracy of providers' biannual BDC filings.

Congress placed a high priority on ensuring that high quality, verified data is used in the National Broadband Map, and today's item helps the Commission meet that obligation. This new certifying engineer standard provides more useful criteria for broadband mapping and ensures that the certifying engineer has extensive education and training in broadband network design and performance, and has direct knowledge of, or responsibility for the provider's BDC filing.

I look forward to working with the Chairman and the Commission to ensure the BDC continues to fulfill the goals of Congress and provides consumers and policymakers with a comprehensive and accurate view of broadband availability across the country.

This item has my support.