

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Build America: Eliminating Barriers to Wireline Deployments*, WC Docket No. 25-253, Notice of Inquiry (Sept. 30, 2025).

Since its rollout in July, the Commission's Build America Agenda has been racking up wins for the American people. We've already advanced plans to accelerate the upgrade from old copper line networks to modern ones, to speed access to utility poles, and to modernize the FCC's approach to environmental reviews.

Building on this momentum, I recently traveled to Malvern, Arkansas to see how our Build America Agenda can help unleash more high-speed infrastructure builds. I got a chance to meet with Kalen and his crew who were laying fiber to bring high-speed connectivity to a community that previously had only copper-line service. Thanks in large part to the FCC's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund, this project currently serves 2,000 homes, expanding opportunity to so many hardworking Americans.

The Malvern, Arkansas success story is one that we want to see across the country. However, before crews like Kalen's can get shovels into the ground, providers must obtain authorizations from state and local authorities. This often requires obtaining permits and approvals from multiple jurisdictions with different timelines, different personnel, and different requirements—all of which increases costs, slows deployment, and discourages private investment. That's why, as part of the Commission's Build America Agenda, we are launching an inquiry to explore permitting reform for wireline networks.

Section 253 of the Communications Act expressly prohibits state and local regulations that effectively prohibit infrastructure builds. As we move forward today, we do so mindful of the FCC's past actions under Section 253. For instance, in 2018, the Commission issued a decision that concluded that Section 253(a) prohibited state and local governments from effectively shutting down new infrastructure builds through moratoria on those construction projects. That same year, the Commission limited process times and fees for the deployment of small wireless facilities. Following these actions, we saw a significant surge in wireline and wireless infrastructure investment. With today's item, the Commission will ask questions and explore ways that we can use that same authority to remove impediments to the deployment of wireline infrastructure.

For their great work on this item, I'd like to thank Malena Barzilai, Jonathan Campbell, Adam Candeub, Matt Collins, Liz Drogula, Garnet Hanly, Rick Mallen, Maria Mullarkey, Brendan Murray, Scott Novak, Anjali Singh, Donald Stockdale, and Geoff Waldau.