

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Build America: Eliminating Barriers to Wireless Deployments*, WT Docket No. 25-276, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (Sept. 30, 2025).

Today's meeting is the "Permitting Reform Edition" of our Build America Agenda. We just voted to advance a proposal to streamline permitting for *wireline* builds. Now, we're doing the same for *wireless* infrastructure. We have two great reasons for doing so: one, it works; and two, it's necessary.

Back in 2017, Chairman Pai asked me to lead the Commission's work to identify and remove barriers to the deployment of thousands of small cells—the building blocks for 5G.

As part of this effort, we first set our sights on the FCC's environmental and historic review processes, which accounted for an outsized share of deployment costs. So, in March 2018, we [passed rules](#) to exempt small cells from the types of reviews required for large, 200-foot towers. Later that year, we adopted a [second package of infrastructure reforms](#) to cap state and local permitting fees and speed up approvals through shot clocks.

Those reforms worked. Many state and local governments became key partners in accelerating 5G builds. Just two years after we adopted our reforms, investment in wireless infrastructure surpassed the previous seven years combined. And since 2018, the number of cell sites in service has more than doubled. Thanks to all this investment and deployment, U.S. networks handled more wireless data in 2023 than they did from 2010 to 2018 combined.

But even with all this success, we have more to do. For one, some state and local governments still do not follow our rules. They sit on applications for too long or demand enormous sums of money to process permitting applications. For another, some authorities have stalled infrastructure builds using new tactics that we didn't have a chance to consider in 2018. And for yet another, our 2018 reforms largely focused on small cells, but not other types of wireless deployments. All told, wireless providers still have to navigate a thicket of red tape to get the permits they need.

That's why we're dusting off our permitting reform playbook as part of the Build America Agenda. We kickstarted those efforts in earnest last month when we opened a proceeding to modernize our environmental and historic reviews.

And with today's item, we are taking a fresh look at our authorities under sections 253 and 332 of the Communications Act to preempt state and local barriers to next-gen builds. We also look to finish our work to implement Section 6409 of the Spectrum Act of 2012, which Congress enacted to fast-track modifications to existing wireless infrastructure.

We're pursuing these reforms because we want American companies to spend less time and money dealing with red tape, and more resources turning dirt and building world class networks.

For their great work on this item, I want to thank Jeff Bartlett, Rashann Duvall, Jennifer Flynn, Eli Johnson, Robert Krinsky, and Jennifer Salhus, from the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau; and Anjali Singh and Scott Noveck from the Office of General Counsel.