

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER OLIVIA TRUSTY**

Re: *Unleashing Unlicensed Spectrum for Direct-to-Device*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, ET Docket No. 26-169 (August 6, 2026).

Earlier this week, I had the opportunity to visit NASA headquarters, where I learned more about how the agency is working to advance American space superiority. In addition to returning Americans to the moon by 2028 and promoting human space exploration throughout our solar system, NASA's work includes enabling more scientific research missions, laying the foundation for lunar economic development, and supporting emerging commercial services in space.

Achieving these goals and maintaining U.S. leadership in this new space age will require a healthy and vibrant orbital ecosystem. One that fosters American free enterprise, technology innovation, scientific discovery, and a sustained U.S. presence in space. The FCC's ongoing work to boost the space economy and encourage the development of direct-to-device services, in particular, is critical to driving this ecosystem forward.

By enabling satellites to connect directly with mobile handsets, D2D technology is creating opportunities to strengthen the U.S. commercial space industry as well as improve communications resilience and accelerate innovation in satellite technology. We have already seen consumers benefiting from commercial D2D offerings on the market today, including emergency text messaging services and improved connectivity in remote locations. And, as D2D services continue to mature, they are expected to support seamless connectivity between terrestrial and non-terrestrial networks providing near-ubiquitous global broadband coverage, enhanced public safety and disaster resilience, and support for the Internet of Things at scale.

To enable continued innovation in D2D technology, I welcome today's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to examine whether existing unlicensed spectrum allocations can support D2D operations. Unlicensed spectrum has unlocked major U.S.-led innovations to date, from Wi-Fi and wireless broadband to consumer electronics, industrial applications, and more. All of which are delivering substantial benefits to consumers and the U.S. economy. With this proceeding, we can determine whether unlicensed spectrum may also play a role in supporting D2D services and potentially other space-based technologies.

The Commission has repeatedly shown that innovation and authorized operations can coexist when spectrum policy is grounded in sound engineering and clear rules. And so, I look forward to reviewing the record in this proceeding to determine whether D2D operations can be introduced into unlicensed spectrum without undermining the reliability and success of existing spectrum users. I also appreciate the Chairman's inclusion of language to strengthen the national security protections in this item by seeking comment on ways to ensure Covered List entities cannot benefit from any future satellite uses of unlicensed spectrum.

Indeed, strengthening U.S. leadership in space and advancing American ingenuity in this emerging frontier is vital to our continued economic prosperity and national security. Today's Commission action takes an important step toward creating new potential opportunities for D2D innovation and next-generation space-based services.

My thanks to the dedicated staff of the Office of Engineering and Technology for their thoughtful work on this item.