STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR

Re: *Accelerating Wireless Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers to Infrastructure Investment,* WT Docket No. 17-79*; Accelerating Wireline Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers to Infrastructure Investment,* WC Docket No. 17-84

The United States is on the cusp of a major upgrade in wireless technology to 5G. The WALL STREET JOURNAL has called it transformative from a technological and economic perspective. And they're right. Winning the global race to 5G—seeing this new platform deployed in the U.S. first—is about economic leadership for the next decade. Those are the stakes, and here's how we know it.

Think back ten years ago when we were on the cusp of upgrading from 3G to 4G. Think about the largest stocks and some of the biggest drivers of our economy. It was big banks and big oil. Fast forward to today: U.S.-based technology companies, from FAANG (Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix, and Google) down to the latest startup, have transformed our economy and our lives.

Think about your own life. A decade ago, catching a ride across town involved calling a phone number, waiting 20 minutes for a cab to arrive, and paying rates that were inaccessible to many people. Today, we have Lyft, Uber, Via, and other options.

A decade ago, sending money meant going to a brick-and-mortar bank, standing in that rope line, getting frustrated when that pen leashed to the table was out of ink (again!), and ultimately conducting your transaction with a teller. Now, with Square, Venmo, and other apps you can send money or deposit checks from anywhere, 24 hours a day.

A decade ago, taking a road trip across the country meant walking into your local AAA office, telling them the stops along your way, and waiting for them to print out a TripTik booklet filled with maps that you would unfold as you drove down the highway. Now, with Google Maps and other apps you get real-time updates and directions right on your smartphone.

American companies led the way in developing these 4G innovations. But it's not by chance or luck that the United States is the world's tech and innovation hub. We have the strongest wireless economy in the world because we won the race to 4G. No country had faster 4G deployment and more intense investment than we did. Winning the race to 4G added $100 billion to our GDP. It led to $125 billion in revenue for U.S. companies that could have gone abroad. It grew wireless jobs in the U.S. by 84 percent. And our world-leading 4G networks now support today's $950 billion app economy. That history should remind policymakers at all levels of government exactly what is at stake. 5G is about our leadership for the next decade.

And being first matters. It determines whether capital will flow here, whether innovators will start their new businesses here, and whether the economy that benefits is the one here. Or as Deloitte put it: "First-adopter countries . . . could sustain more than a decade of competitive advantage."

We're not the only country that wants to be first to 5G. One of our biggest competitors is China. They view 5G as a chance to flip the script. They want to lead the tech sector for the next decade. And they are moving aggressively to deploy the infrastructure needed for 5G.

Since 2015, China has deployed 350,000 cell sites. We've built fewer than 30,000. Right now, China is deploying 460 cell sites a day. That is twelve times our pace. We have to be honest about this

infrastructure challenge. The time for empty statements about carrots and sticks is over. We need a concrete plan to close the gap with China and win the race to 5G.

We take this challenge seriously at the FCC. And we are getting the government out of the way, so that the private sector can invest and compete.

In March, we held that small cells should be treated differently than large, 200-foot towers. And we're already seeing results. That decision cut $1.5 billion in red tape, and one provider reports that it is now clearing small cells for construction at six times the pace as before.

So we're making progress in closing the infrastructure gap with China. But hurdles remain. We've heard from dozens of mayors, local officials, and state lawmakers who get what 5G means—they understand the economic opportunity that comes with it. But they worry that the billions in investment needed to deploy these networks will be consumed by the high fees and long delays imposed by big, "must-serve" cities. They worry that, without federal action, they may not see 5G. I'd like to read from a few of the many comments I've received over the last few months.

Duane Ankney is a retired coal miner from Montana with a handlebar mustache that would be the envy of nearly any hipster today. But more relevantly, he's a Member of the Montana State Legislature and chairs its Energy and Telecommunications Committee. He writes: "Where I see the problem is, that most of investment capital is spent in the larger urban areas. This is primarily due to the high regulatory cost and the cost recovery [that] can be made in those areas. This leaves the rural areas out."

Mary Whisenand, an Iowa commissioner, writes: "With 99 counties in Iowa, we understand the need to streamline the network buildout process so it's not just the big cities that get 5G but also our small towns. If companies are tied up with delays and high fees, it's going to take that much longer for each and every Iowan to see the next generation of connectivity."

Ashton Hayward, the Mayor of Pensacola, Florida, writes: "[E]xcessive and arbitrary fees . . . result[] in nothing more than telecom providers being required to spend limited investment dollars on fees as opposed to spending those limited resources on the type of high-speed infrastructure that is so important in our community."

And the entire board of commissioners from a more rural area in Michigan writes: "Smaller communities such as those located in St. Clair County would benefit by having the [FCC] reduce the costly and unnecessary fees that some larger communities place on small cells as a condition of deployment. These fees, wholly disproportionate to any cost, put communities like ours at an unfair disadvantage. By making small cell deployment less expensive, the FCC will send a clear message that all communities, regardless of size, should share in the benefits of this crucial new technology."

They're right. When I think about success—when I think about winning the race to 5G—the finish line is not the moment we see next-gen deployments in New York or San Francisco. Success can only be achieved when all Americans, no matter where they live, have a fair shot at fast, affordable broadband.

So today, we build on the smart infrastructure policies championed by state and local leaders. We ensure that no city is subsidizing 5G. We prevent excessive fees that would threaten 5G deployment. And we update our shot clocks to account for new small cell deployments. I want to thank Commissioner Rosenworcel for improving the new shot clocks with edits that protect municipalities from providers that submit incomplete applications and provide localities with more time to adjust their operations. Her ideas improved this portion of the order.

More broadly, our decision today has benefited from the diverse views expressed by a range of stakeholders. On the local government side, I met with mayors, city planners, and other officials in their home communities and learned from their perspectives. They pushed back on the proposed "deemed granted" remedy, on regulating rents on their property outside of rights-of-way, and on limits to reasonable aesthetic reviews. They reminded me that they're the ones that get pulled aside at the grocery store when an unsightly small cell goes up. Their views carried the day on all of those points. And our approach respects the compromises reached in state legislatures around the country by not preempting nearly any of the provisions in the 20 state level small cells bills.

This is a balanced approach that will help speed the deployment of 5G. Right now, there is a cottage industry of consultants spurring lawsuits and disputes in courtrooms and city halls around the country over the scope of Sections 253 and 332. With this decision, we provide clear and updated guidance, which will eliminate the uncertainty inspiring much of that litigation.

Some have also argued that we unduly limit local aesthetic reviews. But allowing reasonable aesthetic reviews—and thus only preventing unreasonable ones—does not strike me as a claim worth lodging.

And some have asked whether this reform will make a real difference in speeding 5G deployment and closing the digital divide. The answer is yes. It will cut $2 billion in red tape. That's about $8,000 in savings per small cell. Cutting these costs changes the prospects for communities that might otherwise get left behind. It will stimulate $2.4 billion in new small cell deployments. That will cover 1.8 million more homes and businesses—97% of which are in rural and suburban communities. That is more broadband for more Americans.

* * *

In closing, I want to thank my colleagues for working to put these ideas in place. I want to thank Chairman Pai for his leadership in removing these regulatory barriers. And I want to recognize the exceptionally hard-working team at the FCC that helped lead this effort, including, in the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Donald Stockdale, Suzanne Tetrault, Garnet Hanly, Jonathan Campbell, Stacy Ferraro, Leon Jackler, Eli Johnson, Jonathan Lechter, Marcus Maher, Betsy McIntyre, Darrel Pae, Jennifer Salhus, Jiaming Shang, and David Sieradzki. I also want to thank the team in the Office of General Counsel, including Tom Johnson, Ashley Boizelle, Bill Richardson, and Anjali Singh.