

**STATEMENT OF  
CHAIRMAN TOM WHEELER**

Re: *Petition of USTelecom for Forbearance Pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 160(c) from Enforcement of Obsolete ILEC Legacy Regulations That Inhibit Deployment of Next-Generation Networks*, WC Docket No. 14-192, *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization*, WC Docket No. 11-42, *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90.

The over-arching goal of the Commission's process reform initiative is to improve how the agency conducts its business and, ultimately, the Commission's effectiveness in promoting the public interest. Getting process reform right requires balancing sometimes competing goals. On the one hand, we want to eliminate outdated, unnecessary rules to let the marketplace work. On the other, we have an obligation to preserve core values like competition, consumer protection, and universal service. Balanced properly, these commitments can promote innovation and investment, paving the way for the deployment of the new networks and services that consumers demand. This Order gets that balance right.

Today, we consider a petition from USTelecom that seeks forbearance relief from a broad array of obligations that apply to incumbent telephone carriers. These rules were adopted to protect or expand competition, but technological and market conditions have changed dramatically, making the rules outdated.

When we consider whether to grant forbearance, we must ask several essential questions: Is this rule necessary to ensure that rates and practices are just and reasonable? Is it necessary to protect consumers? Would eliminating the rule serve the public interest? Would it promote competition?

The item we adopt today carefully considers the issues one-by-one. We grant forbearance to the full extent supported by the record. The Order eliminates costly regulations that are no longer necessary in today's environment. Removing these rules will promote the ability of local phone companies to build out broadband and invest in modern and efficient networks.

At the same time, it preserves requirements that remain essential to our fundamental mission. The item ensures that price cap carriers remain obligated to provide reasonably priced voice service to consumers living in areas that are the most expensive to serve.

This Order is just the latest evidence that the Commission takes a common-sense approach to regulation, and will eliminate outdated, unnecessary rules to let the marketplace work, while taking the necessary steps to ensure consumers are protected.

Thank you to the Wireline Competition Bureau for their work on this item.