

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Inquiry Concerning the Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability to All Americans in a Reasonable and Timely Fashion*, GN Docket No. 22-270, 2024 Section 706 Report (March 14, 2024)

In the United States, we dream big and do audacious things. We connected the coasts with railways. We crisscrossed this country with interstate highways. We did these things because they strengthened our communities, our economy, and our national security. Today we are engaged in the same kind of history-making because we are building high-speed broadband to everyone, everywhere in this country.

We have committed to this course—at the Federal Communications Commission, with our colleagues at other agencies, and with Congress—because we know that all of us need access to broadband to have a fair shot at 21st century success.

Nothing made this apparent like the pandemic. After all, it was just four years ago this week that so many of us were told to head home. Life moved online—school, work, healthcare, and so much more. But not all of us were able to make this digital leap. Not everyone had access to reliable broadband. The pandemic exposed our digital divide in living color.

That is why we are now in the bold business of fixing this divide. That is why today the Commission updates its standard for broadband, our baseline, to 100 Megabits down and 20 Megabits up from 25 Megabits down and 3 Megabits up. This fix is overdue. It aligns us with pandemic legislation like the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the work of our colleagues at other agencies. It also helps us better identify the extent to which low-income neighborhoods and rural communities are underserved. And because doing big things is in our DNA, we also adopt a long-term goal of 1 Gigabit down and 500 Megabits up.

One more thing. The law requires that we assess how reasonable and timely the deployment of broadband is in this country. So we do something in this report that is simple. We are honest. Our goal is to connect everyone, everywhere to high-speed broadband. But the last fully vetted and validated annual data before this agency show conclusively that we are not there yet. Nearly 24 million are not connected, including 28% of Americans living in rural areas and more than 23% of people on Tribal lands. That means millions of people still do not have the broadband they need to fully participate in modern life. We are working on it. That is why we have revamped our broadband mapping at this agency. It is why we are refining our universal service programs. It is why our colleagues at other agencies have been given unprecedented billions from Congress to help build broadband infrastructure to places that are still without.

Don't bet against us. Because we are making progress. So many providers are building and so many communities are planning their digital futures. Big things are ahead.

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