

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER ANNA M. GOMEZ**

Re: *Establishing a 5G Fund for Rural America*, GN Docket No. 20-32, Second Report and Order, Order on Reconsideration and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (August 28, 2024)

We all know how important broadband is. The bipartisan efforts across government to support the deployment and adoption of broadband speak to that. Critical among these efforts is the Broadband Data Collection. This effort was spearheaded by the FCC's Broadband Data Task Force, which worked innovatively, collaboratively, and tirelessly with industry and communities to create a broadband map that is both the best we have ever had and perpetually iterative. As a result of that work, we now have a critical tool to identify where the provision of 5G services is lacking.

This order is the next step in a long-term bipartisan undertaking to update and target how limited Universal Service High Cost support resources are used to deliver 5G mobile broadband to rural America. Notably, it is both necessary to move forward and it is not the final step. We make critical decisions in this order that are informed by active engagement with a range of stakeholders that includes consumer advocates, nationwide wireless providers, and many smaller wireless providers that are serving rural America today. This order recognizes both the importance to potential bidders of knowing where the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program will support fiber deployment and the reality that we cannot wait until every dollar is awarded to start moving this parallel effort forward. The cost of delay to rural consumers has to be part of the equation.

I look forward to continued engagement with stakeholders as we move forward on this important and complex proceeding.