

## Statement of Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein, Dissenting



While there is good reason for optimism about the transformative power of broadband, I must dissent from the core holding of this Report. Congress

directed this Commission to determine whether advanced telecommunications capability is being deployed to all Americans in a reasonable and timely fashion, and to advise if more action is needed.

Unfortunately, there are serious warning signs that we are falling behind. Most notably, the U.S. was recently ranked 11th in the world for broadband penetration, and other sources suggest that we are trailing our closest competitors among the industrialized nations.

Broadband providers in the U.S. have made remarkable strides, but a country of our ingenuity and historic leadership in telecommunications must do better.

Our country is increasingly reliant on the power of instantaneous telecommunications. From telecommuting to distance learning to telemedicine, broadband is bridging the distances between us and transforming communities. As these powerful communications tools evolve, the deployment of broadband is ever more critical to the health of our economy and quality of life.

This Report highlights encouraging stories of broadband deployment that can serve as models to assist other communities in meeting their broadband needs. It documents the remarkable commitment and investment of service providers to bring broadband to their customers. Many innovative companies are staking their futures on broadband. These providers are courageously taking risks despite uncertainty about the regulatory framework they will face.

Given our increasing reliance on high speed communications, I am concerned about mounting

evidence that we are falling behind in broadband deployment. Data in the Report show that the global leaders not only have higher penetration, but offer higher speeds at lower prices. These findings seriously suggest that our current definition of “first-generation” broadband is woefully out of step with the global leaders, and that we should already be tracking the deployment of next-generation broadband services.

I am also concerned about the prospects for rapid deployment to communities traditionally unserved by market forces alone. If we are soon to achieve universal access to broadband, we need to give providers serving those hardest-to-reach consumers more tools, and we must protect and advance programs like universal service that have facilitated build-out to so many communities.

I have seen firsthand how important broadband is to rural communities, those on tribal lands, and persons with disabilities. Broadband gives businesses in Rural America the tools they need to compete across the globe. Access to telemedicine and distance learning, and the vast array of resources available through the Internet, gives rural Americans the same opportunities that others enjoy. Broadband services also play an increasing role in giving persons with disabilities functional equivalence. For these reasons, we must re-double our efforts.

While we continue to improve this Report, it ultimately remains hindered by the lack of critical data that would allow us to gauge more accurately and comprehensively broadband availability. Despite longstanding acknowledgement of the limitations of the overbroad zip code data, we again make conclusions about critical segments of our population without all the facts. Given that lack of information, strong indications that we are trailing in the global marketplace, and the importance of broadband to our overall economic health, I cannot conclude that broadband deployment is reasonable and timely.

