

SEPARATE STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER KATHLEEN Q. ABERNATHY

Re: Inquiry Regarding Carrier Current Systems, Including Broadband Over Power Line Systems, Notice of Inquiry (adopted Apr. 23, 2003)

This Notice of Inquiry on power line broadband systems advances the FCC's critical mission of bringing a new broadband platform to the home. This proceeding will enable us to evaluate the current state of powerline technology and determine whether changes to Part 15 are necessary to facilitate its deployment. While the NOI focuses on technical issues, such as procedures for measuring emissions from carrier current systems, its policy implications are unmistakable: If the FCC can help pave the way for the deployment of broadband over power line technologies, that will prove tremendously valuable in promoting the core statutory goals of broadband deployment and facilities-based competition.

As the Commission has repeatedly made clear, facilitating broadband deployment is one of our central policy objectives. In the *Triennial Review* proceeding, the Commission sought to promote this goal by restoring incentives for wireline carriers to invest in next-generation fiber networks. And in the proceedings concerning the statutory classification and regulatory treatment of cable modem and DSL services, the Commission is seeking to create a more coherent and predictable framework for the regulation of broadband services. But these proceedings — as important as they are — will take us only so far. The true key to achieving Congress's objective of a deregulatory and procompetitive framework lies in moving beyond duopoly towards a world where *multiple* facilities-based providers compete in the broadband arena. Innovations such as broadband over power line systems hold great promise in bringing us closer towards fulfillment of that goal. Moreover, given the ubiquity of electric utilities, powerline technology should help extend broadband services to rural and other underserved areas. Together with exciting developments in the areas of wireless broadband services and two-way satellite services (which should be aided by today's item concerning satellite licensing reform), the maturation of broadband over power line technology is a cause for celebration.