

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Connect America Fund, et al*, WC Docket Nos. 10-90, 18-143, 19-126, 24-144, Report and Order and Order (December 11, 2024).

If you want to build a digital future that works for everyone, you need to start with connecting everywhere in this country to high-speed broadband. For the first time in history, we have many programs to do it. We have an unprecedented commitment to making sure no individual or community remains stuck on the wrong side of the digital divide.

Getting this done right requires extraordinary attention to detail. One of the details that matters—really matters—is making sure that the funds we provide go to meaningful broadband buildout. To ensure this is the case, the Federal Communications Commission has historically required that carriers receiving certain funds for service in high-cost areas secure a letter of credit from a qualified bank. This protects the integrity of our programs and helps ensure our ability to recoup support in the event of default. These are the right goals. But over time we have found that aspects of our letter of credit requirements are so stringent that they can get in the way of building better broadband. That is why we update them here. By doing so, we can help speed the deployment of high-speed service to those in places without.

I want to thank the staff responsible for this effort, including Nathan Eagan, Jodie Griffin, Trent Harkrader, Jesse Jachman, and Heidi Lankau from the Wireline Competition Bureau; Malena Barzilai, Thomas Driscoll, Joel Graham, Michael Janson, Richard Mallen, and Wisam Naoum from the Office of General Counsel; Mary Lovejoy, Gary Michaels, Mark Montano, and Kelly Quinn from the Office of Economics and Analytics; Garnet Hanly from the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau; and Michael Gussow and Joycelyn James from the Office of Communications Business Opportunities.