

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Affordable Connectivity Program*, WC Docket No. 21-450, Fourth Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (November 15, 2022).

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) has made broadband adoption possible for millions of households nationwide. Indeed, nearly 15 million eligible households have signed up to take advantage of free and discounted broadband.¹ This item completes our statutory obligation to adopt rules regarding the annual collection of information related to the price and subscription rates of internet service offerings of ACP providers to which an ACP household subscribes.

The data we collect as a result of this information collection, when coupled with the information included as part of the Commission's broadband labels,² will greatly inform our policymaking going forward. We'll learn what speeds and services that ACP participants prefer. We'll learn the cost of these offerings, as well as the other terms and conditions that ACP participants encounter as they make their broadband selection. And, as we begin to roll out millions of dollars in grants to help increase ACP awareness and enrollment,³ I hope that the grantees look to the data we collect here to help them better serve their communities. I also expect that Internet service providers will use this data to better target their broadband offerings to ACP participants.

I'm thankful to the fantastic FCC staff for their hard work in meeting our statutory deadline. But, I'm also open to revising the collection, if necessary, consistent with our statutory requirement.⁴ There are questions for which we seek comment in the Further Notice that are worthy of further consideration.

While I agree with the decision here to adopt an aggregated collection to satisfy our statutory requirement, I also support seeking further comment on whether there is value in collecting subscriber-level data. While aggregated data is valuable, more granular data could provide additional ACP insights going forward. I'm also glad we will seek to build a record on the enrollment process. In my trips to support ACP in Denver, San Francisco, Chicago, Oakland, and elsewhere, one constant refrain is how challenging many eligible households find the enrollment process. While we are testing out solutions in the ACP pilot programs,⁵ collecting additional data could help clearly identify issues. We can then consider targeted solutions to improve enrollment to ensure that ACP fully benefits all eligible Americans.

Thank you to the FCC staff who worked on this item. It has my support.

¹ As for 11/20/22, 14,948,398 households are enrolled. See "Total Households Enrolled—Weekly", ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker, USAC.org (last visited Nov. 20, 2022), available at <https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/acp-enrollment-and-claims-tracker/>.

² *Empowering Broadband Consumers Through Transparency*, CG Docket No. 22-2, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 22-86 (Nov. 14, 2022).

³ See *Affordable Connectivity Program*, WC Docket No. 21-450, Third Report and Order, FCC 22-65 (Aug. 5, 2022) (*Your Home, Your Internet Order*); *Affordable Connectivity Program*, WC Docket No. 21-450, Second Report and Order, FCC 22-64 (Aug. 5, 2022).

⁴ Infrastructure Act, div. F., tit. V, § 60502(c)(2).

⁵ See, e.g., *Your Home, Your Internet Order*, para. 16.