

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN**

Re: *Rural Call Completion*, WC Docket No. 13-39.

Five years ago, we adopted the *First Report and Order* on rural call completion. Today, we reaffirm our commitment to all Americans —especially those living in rural America— that every call matters.

Call failures impose high economic and personal costs, frustrate our universal service goals, and undermine a carrier’s obligations to provide service without discrimination or undue prejudice to any locality. During times of emergency, even one call failure can be a threat to public safety and have disastrous results for everyone involved.

This Second Report and Order and Third Further Notice takes additional measures, and proposes further improvements for Americans living in rural areas who deserve the same degree of long-distance call reliability most Americans enjoy.

This item requires covered providers to monitor the performance of the “intermediate providers” to which they hand off calls. They must take reasonable steps to correct call completion issues, including removing the intermediate provider from a route after sustained inadequate performance. Today we leave no doubt that the covered provider is the one responsible for call completion issues, which enhances our ability to take enforcement action.

I would like to thank to my colleagues for remaining vigilant on this critical issue and including language directing the FCC staff to continue to monitor the state of call completion over the next several years and issue a report on the progress and the effectiveness of our rules. The stakes are high and we cannot rest until this problem is no more. For accommodating my other requests to reduce and resolve any discovered call completion issues without delay, I again thank my colleagues. These changes include treating adherence to the best practices in the ATIS Rural Call Completion Handbook as a safe harbor and requiring covered providers to respond to rural carriers complaining of rural call completion issues within a single business day.

The changes preserve carriers’ flexibility to implement our rules, while assuring that the main goal of ensuring all Americans have access to reliable communication services is being fulfilled.

I would like to thank the team from the Wireline Competition Bureau for their dedicated work to ensure that rural America receives every call intended.