

STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JAMES H. QUELLO

Re: Amendment of the Commission's Rules to Establish New Personal Communications Services, GN Docket No. 90-314.

Personal Communications Services (PCS) is a subject that has received a good deal of my time and attention. I have often reiterated my belief that the Commission must move forward as expeditiously as practicable to complete the reconsideration of the PCS rules so that we may begin licensing this family of advanced mobile communications services. The public interest is served best by having early access to an array of lower-cost, ubiquitous, location-independent communications.

I strongly support this Memorandum Opinion and Order. I want to congratulate Chairman Hundt for his leadership in bringing our efforts to closure and thank my fellow Commissioners for their invaluable contributions. I wish to commend the extraordinary efforts of the PCS Task Force and virtually all of the Commission staff in giving birth to a family of new mobile communications services known collectively as PCS.

I have long maintained that there is no "holy grail" of regulatory perfection. The "best rule" is the one that has been promulgated. Although I do not believe that any regulatory scheme can ever be "perfect," I do believe that this item is one of which we can be justifiably proud. It is the product of sustained hard work and thorough evaluation. The American public will benefit in many ways for many years to come by the action taken by the Federal Communications Commission in this proceeding.

Establishing the regulatory framework, while implementing a new licensing procedure mandated by Congress, for a major new communications industry such as PCS, is a complex and time-consuming task. I am convinced that the Commission staff, under the leadership of Chairman Hundt, has valiantly met the challenge. The Commissioners share the vision of a robust competitive new personal mobile communications industry that will benefit the American people in the very near future.

Although sixty-six petitions for reconsideration were filed, the number is deceiving because the parties essentially restated the positions they took during the notice and comment process. Little new information was presented. The Commission acted responsibly in empaneling the PCS Task Force to assist us in determining which issues merited reconsideration.

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Through the efforts of the Task Force and extensive public commentary, the Commission was able to analyze the petitions thoroughly and find common ground for agreement in fine-tuning the plan adopted in the Second Report and Order. We are now able to turn our attention to the competitive bidding rules for broadband PCS and, shortly thereafter, commence the licensing process.

Prompt licensing of PCS meets the business needs of the potential competitors. They must know the "ground rules" so that they may finalize their business plans, complete market studies and technical trials, forge alliances, attract financing, establish standards and manufacture equipment.

We have responded by moving forward expeditiously. The Commission has adopted previously the generic competitive bidding (auction) rules and the regulatory framework for narrowband PCS. Today we take another significant -- and final -- step toward making PCS a reality. I am satisfied that the FCC is proceeding apace but we must not slacken our efforts; much work remains. We must resolve any issues and adopt the auction rules for broadband PCS in short order.