CHAIRMAN PAI ANNOUNCES NEW APPOINTMENTS TO THE NATIVE NATIONS COMMUNICATIONS TASK FORCE

Chairman Ajit Pai today announced the appointment of nineteen (19) Tribal members and eight (8) FCC members to the FCC’s renewed Native Nations Communications Task Force (Task Force). The Task Force is comprised of elected and appointed leaders, or their designees, from a broad cross section of Native Nations, as well as senior staff and decision-makers from across the Commission. Chairman Pai also named Matthew Duchesne, Chief of the Commission’s Office of Native Affairs and Policy, as Co-Chair. A Tribal Co-Chair will be elected by the Tribal members. The Task Force will help the Commission fulfill its commitment to increase access to broadband and other communications infrastructure deployment and services on Tribal lands.

“The Commission is excited to announce the members of the Native Nations Communications Task Force,” said Patrick Webre, Chief of the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau. “The Task Force will continue the work of helping the Commission design and implement policies to close the digital divide. Too often, Tribal Nations are on the wrong side of that divide, and we look forward to receiving the Task Force’s ideas for fostering more and better communications infrastructure and services on Tribal lands. The Task Force will be an important element of our commitment to work with Tribes on a government-to-government basis to address issues of mutual interest.”

BACKGROUND

On February 8, 2018, the Commission issued a Public Notice announcing the renewal and renaming of the Task Force and seeking nominations for membership from Tribal Nations. Members will again serve for three years, starting from the date of this announcement. The date of the Task Force’s first meeting will be announced in a subsequent Public Notice.

1 Originally created in 2011 as the Native Nations Broadband Task Force, the Task Force has been renamed to reflect its involvement in issues including, but also reaching beyond, broadband deployment. See FCC Seeks Nominations for Tribal Government Representatives to Serve on Renewed Native Nations Communications Task Force, Public Notice, 33 FCC Rcd 1264 (2018).
MISSION

The Task Force’s mission is to provide guidance, expertise, and recommendations to specific requests from the Commission on a range of telecommunications issues that directly or indirectly affect Tribal governments and their people. This will enhance the Commission’s ability to carry out its statutory responsibilities to ensure the availability of communications by wire and radio, and encourage broadband deployment, to all Americans.

MEMBERS OF THE NATIVE NATIONS COMMUNICATIONS TASK FORCE

The newly appointed Tribal Task Force members are:

- Honorable Susie Allen, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- Honorable Cheryl Andrews-Maltais, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)
- Honorable Michael Conners, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe
- Honorable Joe Garcia, Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo
- Honorable Frankie Hargis, Cherokee Nation
- Honorable Jefferson Keel, Chickasaw Nation
- Honorable Andy Teuber, Tangela Native Village
- Honorable Joey Whitman, Gila River Indian Community
- Joelynn Ashley, Navajo Nation
- Bill Bryant, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
- Crystal Hottowe, Makah Tribe
- Kristan Johnson, Tohono O'odham Nation
- Donald Long Knife, Fort Belknap Indian Community
- Robert A. Lucas II, Tanana Chiefs Conference
- Peter McCaslin, Kenaitze Indian Tribe
- Will Micklin, Ewiaapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians
- Theron Rutyna, Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians
- Danae Wilson, Nez Perce Tribe
- Karen Woodard, Morongo Band of Mission Indians

The Federal Communications Commission members are:

- Matthew Duchesne, Office of Native Affairs and Policy, Commission Co-Chair
- Janet Sievert, Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
- Sue McNeil, Wireline Competition Bureau
- Suzanne Tetreault, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau
- Lisa Scanlan, Media Bureau
- David Furth, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau
- Lisa Gelb, Enforcement Bureau
EXEMPTION FROM THE FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT

Pursuant to the “intergovernmental communication” exemption of UMRA, the Task Force is not subject to, and is not required to follow, the procedures set forth in the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), 5 U.S.C. App 2 (1988).

ACCESSIBLE FORMATS

To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau at (202) 418-0530 (voice) or (202) 418-0432 (TTY).

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, please contact: Janet Sievert, Legal Advisor, Office of Native Affairs and Policy, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, (202) 418-1362, janet.sievert@fcc.gov.

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3 See 47 C.F.R. § 0.701 (a)