

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER AJIT PAI**

Re: *Expanding Access to Broadband and Encouraging Innovation through Establishment of an Air-Ground Mobile Broadband Secondary Service for Passengers Aboard Aircraft in the 14.0–14.5 GHz Band*, GN Docket No. 13-114, RM-11640.

It's happened to almost every sports fan. You're flying during the NFL playoffs or March Madness, you boot up your laptop (eager to see how the Kansas City Chiefs or University of Kansas Jayhawks are doing), and lo and behold—there's no Wi-Fi. Or worse, you get a connection, but the broadband is so slow and pricey that you wish you hadn't.

Like many Americans, I have been frustrated by the lack of high-speed broadband service when I fly. Some flights don't offer any broadband service at all. Others do, but speeds are usually much slower than what we enjoy on the ground, and it's expensive. So what does this mean? Lower productivity for business travelers and less enjoyable flights for vacationers.

That's why I was pleased to learn about Qualcomm's proposed air-ground mobile broadband system. Last October, I had the opportunity to see firsthand some of the equipment being developed by Qualcomm in San Diego. This system has the potential to deliver a much better broadband experience for members of the flying public. Because it would use a wide swath of spectrum, the system's data throughput would be much greater than current onboard options. For passengers, that should mean higher speeds and the ability to access a wider range of applications, like video. Moreover, injecting additional competition into the air-ground broadband market should lead current service providers to lower prices and to improve their quality of service.

These prospects are exciting, but we also have to be careful not to get ahead of ourselves. Today, we are simply taking the step of seeking comment on establishing a new air-ground mobile broadband service in the 14.0–14.5 GHz band. Because this new service would have secondary status, we will have to ensure that it would not interfere with the band's incumbent users. I hope that in time, the record in this proceeding will include detailed engineering studies that will help us assess whether our proposal today would preserve the ability of current Fixed-Satellite Service (FSS) providers to conduct their operations and to innovate in the 14.0–14.5 GHz band.

Finally, I would like to thank the staff of the International Bureau, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, and Office of Engineering and Technology for all of their hard work on this NPRM. Like so many Commission items, today's NPRM resulted from collaboration among multiple Bureaus and Offices, and our work product is strengthened substantially by such a team effort.