

**STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER AJIT PAI  
ON PRESENTATION OF STAFF WORKING GROUP ON PROCESS REFORM**

**January 30, 2014**

FCC process reform isn't the most scintillating of topics. Last year, when I wanted to give a speech outlining my proposals for reforming the Commission processes, I went to the only group in the United States that I thought might be interested: the Federal Communications Bar Association. And even then, I'm pretty sure that I saw some audience members nodding off during my lunchtime presentation.

But while FCC process reform might not be exciting, it matters. As I stated during my first speech as a Commissioner, the FCC must become as nimble as the industry we oversee. Too often, proceedings drag on for years. The American people deserve better. Whether the matter before us involves a Fortune 500 company, a small start-up, a public interest group, or an individual consumer, the Commission should strive to respond promptly. Parties might not like the answer that we give them. But they deserve an answer. As one person said to me, "Tell me yes, tell me no, but just tell me."

This sentiment explains why I applauded Chairman Wheeler for picking up the process reform banner during his first days on the job. And it leads me to commend Diane Cornell for her leadership on this occasionally arcane issue. Since coming onboard, Diane has been in regular contact with my staff, and I appreciate her willingness to incorporate our input into the working group's report.

I also was pleased to see that the working group reached out to solicit ideas from the FCC's staff. I know the Commission's employees can feel shackled by these same process issues. FCC staffers work exceptionally hard and are incredibly talented. I saw that firsthand when I worked in the Office of General Counsel. But too often, our internal processes fail them. I saw that firsthand, too, when I was a staffer. So I am not surprised that many of the report's recommendations came from our staff.

Going forward, I hope that we will move expeditiously to reform the Commission's processes after receiving and reviewing public comment on the report. It would be a cruel irony indeed if the effort to speed up the Commission's work itself became bogged down by bureaucratic inertia. As always, I stand ready to assist in whatever way I can to ensure that doesn't happen.

In particular, I hope that we will prioritize a couple of initiatives that I believe would make a big difference. *First*, we should make our internal processes more efficient wherever possible. Let's expand the categories of smaller transactions that qualify for streamlined treatment. Let's adopt a procedure for handling applications for review akin to the U.S. Supreme Court's *certiorari* process. And let's set more internal deadlines, for nothing concentrates the mind like a deadline.

*Second*, we should bring more transparency to the FCC. We need to make it easier for the public to measure our progress, and if necessary, hold our feet to the fire if we falter. Let's create an FCC Dashboard on our website that collects in one place our key performance metrics. Let's keep track of how many petitions for reconsideration, applications for review, waiver requests, license renewal applications, and consumer complaints are pending at the Commission at any given time. And let's compare the current statistics in all these categories against those from a year ago, from five years ago, so everyone can see if we are headed in the right direction. If we make it easier for others to hold us accountable for our performance, I'm confident that we would act with more dispatch.

One last point before concluding: We need to remember that when it comes to process reform, we do not labor alone. Last year, for example, the House of Representatives unanimously passed the FCC Consolidated Reporting Act, and the House Committee on Energy and Commerce passed the bipartisan FCC Process Reform Act. These two pieces of legislation would greatly assist us in becoming more efficient—indeed, many of the reforms reported today are no doubt inspired by those bills. We therefore should coordinate our process reform efforts with those taking place in Congress and keep our oversight committees fully apprised of our progress.