

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER AJIT PAI**

Re: *Improving Outage Reporting for Submarine Cable Outages*, GN Docket No. 15-206.

Long before anyone talked about fiber to the home, the gold standard in communication was ship to the port. Messages between the United States and the Old World traveled by boat, and transmission speeds were measured in weeks, not milliseconds. That all started to change back in the 1850s when the first transatlantic cable was deployed. It was a daunting task, to say the least.

In 1857, on the first day of the first attempt, the cable snapped and had to be grappled from the sea floor. After repairing the damage, the engineers pressed on. But the line broke again after only 400 miles had been laid. After many more setbacks and challenges, the American businessman Cyrus West Field succeeded in completing the first transatlantic cable on August 5, 1858. And the first official telegram to pass between the two continents was a letter of congratulations from Queen Victoria to President Buchanan. Unfortunately, that first undersea cable proved unreliable, as it malfunctioned after only three weeks. It wasn't until September 1866—nearly a decade hence—that transatlantic telegraph communication resumed.

Almost 150 years later, much has changed. Those old copper lines have been replaced by fiber. And transmission speeds across a cable have increased from a single character every two minutes to more than 84 billion words per second. Vital communications now depend on the undersea cables that link every continent but Antarctica—everything from trillions of dollars in global economic activity to the YouTube clips of my children that have become must-see videos for my extended family back in India.

But despite all of the progress, some things stay the same. Constructing, maintaining, and repairing undersea cables, which can be broken by anything from an errant anchor to a wayward whale, continue to be costly and time-consuming processes. Moreover, an alphabet soup of agencies may (try to) play a role in the process. So I am pleased that my colleagues agreed to seek comment in this Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on how we can streamline the regulatory framework, remove any unnecessary rules, and expedite the construction and maintenance of undersea cables. I am also glad that the NPRM now solicits input on the actual costs our proposed rules might impose and on alternatives that might ease regulatory burdens while also giving us the information we need to fulfill our specific statutory responsibilities. As a result, the NPRM has my support, and I look forward to reviewing the record as it develops in this proceeding.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Denise Coca, Kathleen Collins, Lisa Fowlkes, Jeffery Goldthorp, John Healy, David Krech, Theodore Marcus, and Michael Saperstein for their work on the item.