



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

June 30, 2017

The Honorable Peter Welch
U.S. House of Representatives
2303 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Welch:

Thank you for your letter inquiring about how Vermonters may be impacted by Hearst Television Inc.'s successful bid to relinquish its broadcast license for WNNE in the Incentive Auction. I share your view on the critical nature of local broadcast news. The importance of local stations as a trusted source for news and information—especially when disaster strikes—is among the key reasons why I believe we will always need broadcasters.

So I am pleased to report that WNNE, like 90 percent of reverse auction bidders that relinquished their license in the auction, has indicated that it intends to enter into a channel sharing agreement (CSA) and remain on air, albeit broadcasting on a different channel. The Commission's rules give WNNE up to 120 days (absent an extension) after receiving payment of its share of the auction proceeds to submit an application for a construction permit and an executed copy of the CSA. WNNE also has until 180 days from payment to commence shared operations on its new facilities. The rules also permit WNNE to request up to 180 additional days to complete the transition. Once the Commission has been informed as to what WNNE's post-auction channel sharing plans are, we will be in a better position to know the impact, if any, on viewers.

I agree that it is critical that consumers be aware of any changes to their viewing options that result from the broadcast Incentive Auction. The Commission's rules require *all* transitioning stations—whether they intend to go off-air, move to a shared channel facility, or are being repacked—to provide on-air notice to their viewers. Specifically, a station must air, at minimum, either 60 seconds of on-air consumer education public service announcements (PSAs) or 60 seconds of crawls per day for 30 days prior to termination of operations on their pre-auction channel. Of course, broadcasters are free to air additional notifications so long as the information is accurate and not misleading. I would also like to point out that stations electing to channel share with another station must also include a certification that they have complied with the viewer notification requirements in their online public file within 30 days of beginning operations on the shared channel.

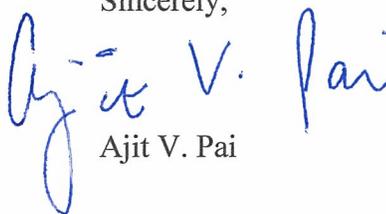
Beyond these requirements, the Commission will help ensure that consumers are aware of any impact on their viewing options. We've already begun by updating two of our consumer guides on over-the-air tuners to reflect the potential impact of the Incentive Auction and the transition. Our Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau recently released a PSA-style video on how to rescan an over-the-air tuner. Stations are free to use or modify this video for their own use. The Commission's consumer call center staff have been trained on how to answer viewer

Page 2—The Honorable Peter Welch

questions about the coming changes to their TV lineups. And we're working with our national partners to develop educational materials and programs to ensure that at-risk constituencies such as seniors, Americans with disabilities, and low-income households get the assistance they need.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

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Ajit V. Pai



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June 30, 2017

The Honorable Bernard Sanders
United States Senate
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Sanders:

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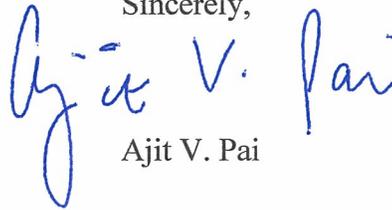
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June 30, 2017

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
United States Senate
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Leahy:

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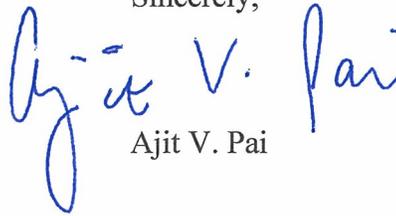
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