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For Immediate Release

CHAIRMAN PAI ANNOUNCES PROPOSAL TO ASSIST EFFORTS TO RESTORE COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS IN PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Would Aid Recovery Efforts by Allowing Access to USF Funds Ahead of Time

WASHINGTON, October 3, 2017— Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai released the following statement today on a proposed order that would enable carriers in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to use their Universal Service Fund allocations to more quickly rebuild networks:

“Hurricane Maria caused catastrophic damage to communications networks in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Yesterday, as part of the FCC’s ongoing work to assist with restoration efforts, I shared with my colleagues an order that would quickly make available up to \$76.9 million of funding to repair wireline and wireless communication networks and restore communications services in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

“Specifically, I am proposing to allow carriers to use money provided through the Universal Service Fund’s high-cost program to repair and restore communications networks throughout Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. I am also proposing that we give carriers operating in these territories the option of receiving USF funding in advance. Instead of receiving a standard monthly payment, carriers could elect this month to receive seven months’ worth of funding immediately in order to expedite repair and restoration efforts.

“I look forward to working with my colleagues on this Order. Given the urgent situation in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, I am asking Commissioners to approve it as soon as possible. If this proposal has not been adopted by the FCC’s October 24 meeting, we will vote on it then.”

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).