



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

November 13, 2017

The Honorable Darren Soto
U.S. House of Representatives
1429 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Soto:

Thank you for your letter dated September 21, 2017, regarding activation of the FM radio functionality on cellphones for use during emergencies. You note that enabling this capability during emergencies would be a cost-effective way of incorporating cellphones into the existing emergency broadcasting infrastructure and increase access to critical emergency information.

Most, but not all, cellphones have an FM tuner as part of the chipset that enables Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity. In some cases this functionality has not been enabled by the cellphone manufacturers. I agree with you that activating FM capability in cellphones is an important public safety issue. In fact, in my first public speech after becoming Chairman, I called on the wireless industry to activate the FM chips that are already installed in most smartphones sold in the United States, and I applauded those companies that have done so. During my recent visit to Puerto Rico to survey efforts to restore communications, I also heard frequent comments in support of enabling FM chips in cell phones. In September, noting the devastation caused by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, I urged Apple to activate FM chip capability in its iPhones, which it has resisted doing in contrast to other phone manufacturers. I am also pleased to note that recently Sprint and Next Radio announced that FM reception would be available on most Sprint Android and Windows phones using the Next Radio app. You may be assured that I will continue to encourage manufacturers and service providers to make FM reception available to consumers to provide cost effective access to critical information during crises.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai".

Ajit V. Pai