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**For Immediate Release**

**FCC STREAMLINES FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESSES**

WASHINGTON, July 12, 2018—The Federal Communications Commission today adopted an Order creating a more uniform set of procedural rules designed to improve formal complaint proceedings handled by the Enforcement Bureau. The Order streamlines and consolidates the procedural rules governing formal complaints against common carriers, formal complaints regarding pole attachments, and formal complaints concerning the accessibility of telecommunications and advanced communications services and equipment for people with disabilities.

Among other changes, the new rules require defendants to answer a complaint filed against them within 30 days and complainants to file a reply within 10 days thereafter. The rules also adopt a uniform approach to discovery in all formal complaint matters, giving parties greater certainty regarding available discovery mechanisms. In addition, the new rules require “executive level” pre-filing settlement discussions in all formal complaint proceedings, and codify the Enforcement Bureau’s practice of providing staff-supervised mediation services to parties wishing to negotiate settlement of their dispute. Finally, in the rules, the Commission commits to the goal of meeting a 270-day shot clock for resolution of formal complaints (except for those complaints already subject to a shorter deadline).

The Enforcement Bureau’s Market Disputes Resolution Division and Telecommunications Consumers Division are tasked with review of such complaints. The new rules build off the best practices and experience of this staff. By formalizing these processes, the Commission is providing greater transparency to parties involved in disputes before the agency.

The Commission distinguishes between formal and informal complaints. The new rules make no changes to existing, long-standing procedures for handling informal consumer complaints.

Action by the Commission July 12, 2018 by Report and Order (FCC 18-96). Chairman Pai, Commissioners O’Rielly, and Carr approving. Commissioner Rosenworcel dissenting. Chairman Pai, Commissioners O’Rielly, Carr, and Rosenworcel issuing separate statements.

EB Docket No. 17-245

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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).*