



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

January 25, 2018

The Honorable Ajit V. Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

I write to urge the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to require that its online public files¹ be made machine-readable before it takes any action to repeal or otherwise modify the rules that require broadcast stations to file their contracts and related documents with the FCC.²

Keeping data in a machine-readable form has been a best practice in the private sector for decades.³ And when it comes to the federal government, the Obama Administration made keeping data in machine-readable formats a priority in 2013.⁴ Yet despite its commitment to transparency in other areas, the FCC still keeps some of its data, including the online public files, in an ancient and opaque format, virtually inaccessible to the public.

To help bring the FCC into the modern era, I introduced the FCC Transparency Act to ensure the public has access to important information held by the FCC in broadcasters' online public files.⁵ But bringing the Commission up to date should not require Congressional action. You should act now to bring the Commission into the twenty-first century. With the Commission proposing to roll back requirements for broadcasters to file paper documents with

¹ 47 C.F.R. § 73.3526.

² 47 C.F.R. § 73.3613.

³ Joan Knutson, *Project Management for Business Professionals, A Comprehensive Guide* (2002) ("It should also be obvious that physical, hard-copy documentation is kept to a minimum, with the official versions of program documents (for example, plans, specifications, issues logs, and so on) being maintained in machine readable form.").

⁴ Exec. Order No. 13642, 78 Fed. Reg. 28111 (May 9, 2013).

⁵ H.R. 1440.



the FCC,⁶ you have an opportunity to finally upgrade the public file and make it machine-readable.

The Commission has an obligation to take this chance to advance transparency and the efficiencies of its processes. Before taking steps that could make it harder for Americans to understand how the public's airwaves are used, the Commission should first make sure information in the online public file is kept in a machine-readable format.

I appreciate your attention to this important matter. Please contact Graham Mason in my office at 202-225-6190 should you have any questions about this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ben Ray Lujan", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Ben Ray Lujan
Member of Congress

⁶ Federal Communications Commission, *Amendment of Section 73.3613 of the Commission's Rules Regarding Filing of Contracts*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, MB Docket No. 18-4, FCC Circ 1801-05, at ¶ 1 (rel. Jan. 9, 2018).