FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

September 7, 2018

The Honorable Alcee L. Hastings
U.S. House of Representatives
2353 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hastings:

Thank you for your letter on pole attachments and "one-touch make-ready" (OTMR) proposals. My highest priority is making sure every American who wants high-speed Internet access can get it. But the plain reality is that if you live in rural America, you are much less likely to have high-speed Internet access than if you live in a city. If you live in a low-income neighborhood, you are less likely to have high-speed Internet access than if you live in a wealthier area. To change that, we need massive investment to construct, expand, and improve wired and wireless networks. And to spur that investment, the FCC needs to remove outdated and unnecessary barriers.

At our August 2 meeting, the FCC did just that by adopting an OTMR regime for the vast majority of attachments governed by federal law. Recommended by the Commission's Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee, OTMR promises to substantially lower the cost and shorten the time to deploy broadband on utility poles. It allows a new provider who wants to attach to a pole to move all the wires and equipment in just one "touch." It's a bit like having to go to the grocery, the dry cleaner, and the bank. The slow way to do this would be to visit each business but return home each time. The rational thing we all do is to do each errand, one after the other, all on one trip. That's essentially what OTMR is.

By making it quicker and cheaper to attach to poles, we can accelerate network buildout and make it easier for new entrants to provide more broadband competition. We included safeguards to protect the public and worker safety and excluded from OTMR new attachments that are more complicated or above the "communications space" of a pole, where safety and reliability risks are greater. We also respected existing collective bargaining agreements, allowing union labor to be present for survey and make-ready work and to conduct post-make-ready inspections through such contracts with existing attachers. Based on the record, we expect the OTMR regime to speed broadband deployment without substantial service interruptions or danger to the public or workers. As Google Fiber has put it, our efforts will "remove obstacles that reduce choice and competition for broadband consumers."

In short, this Commission is heading forward, not backward. We're favoring competition, not the status quo. We're pressing for gigabit fiber, not fading copper. We're embracing the promise of new entrants that want nothing more than a chance to compete, not the

fears of incumbents who always find a way to say no. It's unfortunate that this decision wasn't unanimous, but nonetheless we are optimistic about the positive impact our decision will have on millions of Americans who want better, faster, and cheaper Internet access.

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

Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai