STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI

Re: *Amendment of Parts 2 and 25 of the Commission's Rules to Facilitate the Use of Earth Stations in Motion Communicating with Geostationary Orbit Space Stations in Frequency Bands Allocated to the Fixed Satellite Service*, IB Docket No. 17-95.

During a recent visit to Moab, Utah, I held a videoconference with the school superintendent of a fairly remote district in the state. He told me that district's student-athletes often had to travel several hours in order to play away games. Fortunately, some of their school buses had connectivity, which enabled them to do homework on long drives.

That vignette got me thinking about on-the-road connectivity, including the need to promote satellite-related earth stations in motion (or "ESIMs," for those who are more acronym-inclined). ESIMs are used to deliver broadband to ships, vehicles, and aircraft—basically, any non-stationary platform, especially those that can't be served using other communications technologies.

Today, the FCC advances the use of ESIMs in several ways. First, we allow ESIMs to operate in more satellite frequencies than they can currently use. We aim to spark innovation and investment, encourage deployment, and hopefully connect even more consumers in this fast-growing segment of the satellite marketplace. Second, we explore whether to add even more spectrum bands to the ESIMs-approved list. And third, we simplify the three sets of rules for the three different kinds of ESIMs by establishing a single, unified regulatory framework. This will provide certainty for ESIM operators and their customers.

Our forward-thinking approach to ESIMs reflects our overall strategy for closing the digital divide: to encourage any and all technologies that can connect those for whom Internet access is more aspiration than reality—including many other students on many long bus rides in Utah.

Many thanks to those who worked on this item. In particular, thanks to Jose Albuquerque, Paul Blais, Stephen Duall, Chip Fleming, Cindy Spiers, Jennifer Gilsenan, Walt Strack, Tom Sullivan, and Troy Tanner from the International Bureau; Julie Knapp, Nicholas Oros, Aspasia Paroutsas, and Jamison Prime in the Office of Engineering and Technology; Steve Buenzow from the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau; and Deborah Broderson, David Horowitz, and Bill Richardson from the Office of General Counsel.