

**REMARKS BY FCC CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI
AT THE WIRELESS INFRASTRUCTURE ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION'S
MOBILE INFRASTRUCTURE HALL OF FAME CEREMONY**

WASHINGTON, DC

NOVEMBER 14, 2018

Good evening! What an honor and a pleasure it is to be here.

Thank you, Jonathan, for that kind introduction. And not to talk shop at a dinner event, but thank you for agreeing to serve as Vice-Chair of our Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee's newly established Disaster Response and Recovery Working Group. Thank you to the Wireless Infrastructure Association for inviting me to be a part of this celebration.

And most important: Thank you to tonight's inductees: Steven Bernstein; Steven Dodge; John Kelly; José Mas; and Neville Ray. Each of you is being honored tonight because you are among the best at what you do. And in particular, because what you do is at the foundation of the wireless revolution that has dramatically improved and enriched the lives of the American people.

In preparing for tonight's event, I was reminded of those iconic keynotes that Steve Jobs used to give when he introduced Apple's latest gadget. Do you remember his catchphrase? "It just works." It just works.

Many Americans who have come to rely on these magical devices in our pockets don't think about how it all works—just that it does. And that it does is, in substantial part, because of your contributions. Every day, almost everyone relies on your contributions, but hardly anybody realizes it or thinks about it.

Well, as the Chairman of the FCC, I think about it all the time. I think about how it just works because of the networks of towers and antennas that have been deployed across our country. I think about how it just works because of the crews who climb those towers to install those antennas. I think about how it just works because of the \$35 billion invested annually to expand and upgrade those networks. And I think about how it just works because of the engineers who develop new technologies to use spectrum more efficiently.

That's why it would be difficult for me to overstate how much I appreciate your contributions to our economy and our daily lives. And that's why tonight's event to establish a Mobile Infrastructure Hall of Fame, and to inaugurate such a distinguished first class, is such a great idea. Across the board, the men and women who design and deploy our wireless infrastructure deserve greater recognition. And here, we recognize the best of the best.

I'm proud to lend my voice to the chorus singing the praises of our honorees tonight, but I'm prouder of the fact that I have a track record of showing my respect and admiration for all you do.

I've traveled extensively across this country since becoming Chairman last year, logging over 11,000 road miles across 41 states to better understand the connectivity challenges facing U.S. communities. A common staple of these trips is learning about the physical infrastructure at the heart of our networks and the people who are building it.

I've been to a cell site in El Yunque National Forest in Puerto Rico that was heavily damaged from Hurricane Maria, knocking out wireless service to the island's desperate residents. I've been to Green Mountain Communications in Pembroke, New Hampshire, where the staff showed me the incredibly heavy multi-band antennas and equipment that crews have to lug up towers. I've taken a bucket ride up utility poles in sunny Gainesville, Florida and rainy Springfield, Vermont to get an up-

close view of how difficult it is to string aerial fiber. I've seen small-cells deployed near an overpass in Mobile, Alabama and developed in a lab in Boston, Massachusetts. And I've even climbed a 131-foot tower in rural Colorado in dress shoes much like these, which helped me see the challenge of large-scale deployment, the beauty of the West, and the need to update my life insurance policy.

I tell you all this not to detail my travel schedule. I tell you this to let you know that your work is greatly appreciated by someone who has seen it in every part of this country. And I believe that the FCC's policy record reflects that appreciation. We are taking the steps that are necessary for you to build, maintain, and expand America's wireless networks.

This past March, we reformed our historic preservation and environmental regulations so that small cells don't have to jump through the same regulatory hoops as 200-foot towers. In August, we advanced a federal one-touch-make-ready policy that will make it quicker and cheaper to build out networks. And this September, we approved an important order promoting 5G infrastructure. It sets a reasonable 60-day shot clock for cities to rule on small-cell siting applications and reasonable limits on siting fees—limits that allow localities to cover their costs.

By taking these steps and more, by making it easier for you to do your jobs, I hope and expect these rules will make it easier for more people to benefit from the wireless revolution.

I've talked a lot about the "whats" tonight—what you've done, what we're doing. But let me close with a quick vignette on "why"—why these efforts matter. Less than three weeks ago, I visited a poor neighborhood on the dusty outskirts of New Delhi, India. I had a chance to visit an American Tower cell site. The cell site provides wireless coverage to thousands for whom a mobile phone provides the only digital access. But it also houses a unique partnership with a nonprofit foundation called "Digital Village." Leveraging the tower's connectivity, including fiber backhaul, they've set up connected computers and kiosks that teach Indian children basic skills like arithmetic and digital literacy. I cannot tell you what it meant to look in the faces of these children—most of whom have parents too poor to give them what they need in life, let alone what they might want—and see the happiness and hope they got simply from being able to learn. All this was made possible by wireless infrastructure. I realize our conversations often descend into jargon and acronyms, but I hope we never lose sight of the fact that wireless infrastructure means more than towers and cells and antennas and fiber—it means a brighter future for millions, if not billions, on the wrong side of the digital divide.

For all they've done to help secure that future, I once again thank tonight's honorees on their well-deserved recognition; the Wireless Infrastructure Association for its advocacy; and all of you for helping deliver the mobile future.

Thank you for inviting me, and here's hoping everyone has a great night!