



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

December 31, 2018

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Pallone:

I agree with you that it is time for a comprehensive re-evaluation of the Wireless Resiliency Cooperative Framework. Americans must have access to essential communications networks in times of emergencies and natural disasters. Maintaining and restoring these vital networks must be a priority.

I have taken concrete steps to address these issues after Hurricane Michael. As soon as it became apparent on October 16 that actions to restore wireless service in the Florida Panhandle were too slow in the immediate aftermath of the storm, I called on carriers to publicly disclose how quickly service would be restored and encouraged those carriers to waive consumer bills and fees to customers seeking to change carriers, if necessary. Although we have since learned of some specific challenges, such as unintended fiber cuts, it is still important to gather all the facts of what happened to better inform any actions that we may need to take in the future. To this end, the Commission's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau has sought comment on the preparation for and response to Hurricane Michael.

And after seeing firsthand the impact of natural disasters in Florida, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Texas over the last two years, I decided that it is time for a comprehensive re-evaluation of the Framework. I am certain that we can improve upon it by collecting additional data, such as the extent to which carriers are using the Framework, and by inquiring into whether the Framework should be expanded to include backhaul facilities and what role, if any, power companies should play.

As a starting point, I directed the Bureau to send letters to all participating carriers seeking data on the effectiveness of the current Framework. While those responses are being reviewed, the Bureau has next sought comment on the role of backhaul providers in preparing for and responding to natural disasters. In the new year, I expect the Bureau will seek comment on the appropriate role of electric utilities. The responses to this information-gathering process will help us formulate what rule changes, if any, we might need to ensure the Framework is serving the American people. And working in parallel is the newly-formed Disaster Response and Recovery Working Group of the FCC's Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee. This new Working Group is tasked with developing best practices for coordinating among wireless providers, backhaul providers, and power companies during and after a disaster. It is my

expectation that all these actions will provide valuable inputs for the Commission's re-evaluation of the Framework, and I look forward to working with you on this matter as we move forward.

With respect to the impacts from Typhoon Yutu, the FCC has been in close coordination with response officials on the ground in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Before landfall, FCC staff contacted the Emergency Operations Centers on Saipan and Tinian to check on status and offer any assistance. After landfall, staff contacted the two FCC-licensed submarine cable systems that land in the Northern Mariana Islands and verified that the systems remained operational and sustained no damage from the typhoon. FCC staff remained in contact with the two primary wireless companies in the Northern Mariana Islands to monitor wireless coverage on the islands after the storm. Staff also engaged in nightly teleconferences with government partners including FEMA, DHS/NCC, and NTIA, as well as on-the-ground territorial partners, to gain situational awareness of events as they unfolded and to be responsive to any requests from the ground for Special Temporary Authority, waivers, spectrum management, or outage reporting. Latest reports indicate that telecommunications service has been restored and that three damaged cell sites are still undergoing repairs. We continue to monitor the situation and provide assistance as needed.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Ajit V. Pai