

Media Contact:

Will Wiquist, (202) 418-0509
will.wiquist@fcc.gov

For Immediate Release

**FCC’S HURRICANE MICHAEL INVESTIGATION FINDS
BACKHAUL, ROAMING, AND COORDINATION PROBLEMS
HINDERED RECOVERY OF WIRELESS SERVICES**

FCC Chairman Sets Course for Improvements & Calls on Carriers to Act

WASHINGTON, May 9, 2019—The Federal Communications Commission’s Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau today released a [report](#) on its investigation into communications providers’ preparation for and response to Hurricane Michael. The investigation found that three key factors—insufficiently resilient backhaul connectivity, inadequate reciprocal roaming arrangements, and lack of coordination between wireless service providers, power crews, and municipalities—were the predominant causes of the unacceptably slow restoration of wireless service in the Florida Panhandle following this devastating 2018 storm.

Indeed, the investigation found that recovery efforts themselves often led to communications outages. There were numerous cases in which a wireless provider had restored service to customers only to have that service brought down as third-party crews damaged communications assets while clearing trash or restoring power lines and utility poles. As the report concludes, “Such lack of coordination among wireless providers, utilities, and debris clearance crews unnecessarily prolonged the time customers lacked service.”

“It will come as no surprise to the residents of the Florida Panhandle that there is significant room for improvement on the recovery efforts seen in the wake of Hurricane Michael,” said Chairman Pai, who [visited](#) the region following the storm. “I appreciate the efforts of the FCC’s public safety staff and call on wireless phone companies, other communications providers, and power companies to quickly implement the recommendations contained in this report.”

To improve recovery efforts from future storms, the report recommends that:

- Wireless providers in hurricane-prone areas enter into roaming agreements as part of their pre-storm preparation processes.
- Communications providers and power companies in hurricane-prone areas enter into coordination agreements regarding mutual preparation and restoration efforts that can be activated when a storm strikes.
- Wireless providers use diverse backhaul options, such as microwave links and satellite links in hurricane-prone areas.

- Communications providers participate in training activities to improve coordination of restoration efforts.
- Wireless providers ensure familiarity with applicable best practices, especially as they relate to cooperation and coordination with local utilities.

Last fall, the Chairman charged the FCC's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau with conducting a comprehensive re-examination of the Wireless Resiliency Cooperative Framework. Today's report from the Bureau will help inform that broader review, which currently is underway. The Hurricane Michael Report is available at: <https://www.fcc.gov/michael>

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Office of Chairman Pai: (202) 418-1000 / Twitter: @AjitPaiFCC / www.fcc.gov/leadership/ajit-pai

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