

Media Contact:

Mark Wigfield, (202) 418-0253
mark.wigfield@fcc.gov

For Immediate Release

CHAIRMAN PAI CIRCULATES DRAFT ORDER TO PROVIDE \$950 MILLION FOR BROADBAND NETWORKS IN PUERTO RICO AND THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Funding Will Help Improve and Expand Broadband Service and Harden Networks

WASHINGTON, September 4, 2019—Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai today circulated a draft Order to his fellow commissioners that would provide approximately \$950 million in funding to storm-harden, improve, and expand broadband networks in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, which were devastated by Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017. This is the second round of funding under the FCC’s Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund and Connect USVI Fund and follows \$130 million in extra funding the Commission has provided to restore hurricane-damaged networks in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands since 2017. The draft Order will be considered at FCC’s monthly meeting on September 26. Chairman Pai issued the following statement:

“The FCC took numerous steps to help restore communications in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands following the devastating one-two punches delivered by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. But even as we were responding to immediate needs, we knew that we needed to have a long-term strategy to expand broadband availability in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, improve broadband networks on these islands, and help protect these networks against future storms. That’s why we created the Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund and the Connect USVI Fund.

“This draft Order would deliver on that strategy by allocating about \$950 million in federal universal service support for Stage 2 of the Funds. Significant work has been done to restore connectivity. Now, this new funding would support deployment of the networks of tomorrow, including gigabit fiber and 5G, in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. It would also help ensure that Americans living there will be able to fully participate in the digital economy and remain connected when they need it most. Our goal is simple: to provide everyone in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands with digital opportunity.”

###

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

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).