



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

December 31, 2019

The Honorable Jenniffer Gonzalez-Colon  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1529 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Gonzalez-Colon:

Thank you for your letter regarding the communications restoration efforts in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria. I appreciate you sharing your insights into Puerto Rico's communications needs in the aftermath of these storms, as well as your suggestions about how to improve recovery and restoration efforts in the future. I agree that it is important to help future-proof Puerto Rico's communications networks.

That is why, ever since the 2017 hurricane season, the Commission's energies have been focused on ensuring the recovery and strengthening of Puerto Rico's networks. We created the Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund, which provided more than \$51.2 million in additional funding to facilitate continued network recovery efforts in Puerto Rico in 2018. And we expanded the Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund in 2019, dedicating more than \$500 million over ten years in fixed broadband support and more than \$250 million over three years in mobile broadband support.

These funds are available on a technology neutral basis, including to satellite operators, that are willing to meet the statutory requirement that they offer voice service as an eligible telecommunications carrier. And though federal law gives state commissions, like the Puerto Rico Telecommunications Regulatory Board, the authority to designate eligible telecommunications carriers, Congress reserved authority for the Commission to do so when state commissions cannot—an authority that the Commission has exercised repeatedly when needed.

Your letter also notes that the damage wrought by the 2017 hurricanes continues to impact schools in remote or rural areas in Puerto Rico that are participating in the E-Rate program. I share your view that an effective E-Rate program—one that promotes better connectivity for students and library patrons alike—can be a powerful tool to help bridge the digital divide. And the rules for E-Rate are also technology neutral, allowing schools and libraries to purchase services from satellite operators as well as terrestrial wireless and wireline providers.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ajit" being particularly prominent.

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

December 31, 2019

The Honorable Nydia M. Velazquez  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2302 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Velazquez:

Thank you for your letter regarding the communications restoration efforts in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria. I appreciate you sharing your insights into Puerto Rico's communications needs in the aftermath of these storms, as well as your suggestions about how to improve recovery and restoration efforts in the future. I agree that it is important to help future-proof Puerto Rico's communications networks.

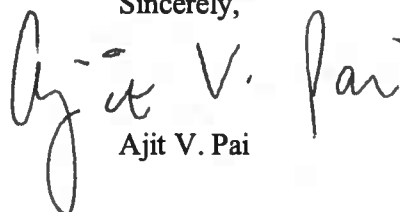
That is why, ever since the 2017 hurricane season, the Commission's energies have been focused on ensuring the recovery and strengthening of Puerto Rico's networks. We created the Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund, which provided more than \$51.2 million in additional funding to facilitate continued network recovery efforts in Puerto Rico in 2018. And we expanded the Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund in 2019, dedicating more than \$500 million over ten years in fixed broadband support and more than \$250 million over three years in mobile broadband support.

These funds are available on a technology neutral basis, including to satellite operators, that are willing to meet the statutory requirement that they offer voice service as an eligible telecommunications carrier. And though federal law gives state commissions, like the Puerto Rico Telecommunications Regulatory Board, the authority to designate eligible telecommunications carriers, Congress reserved authority for the Commission to do so when state commissions cannot—an authority that the Commission has exercised repeatedly when needed.

Your letter also notes that the damage wrought by the 2017 hurricanes continues to impact schools in remote or rural areas in Puerto Rico that are participating in the E-Rate program. I share your view that an effective E-Rate program—one that promotes better connectivity for students and library patrons alike—can be a powerful tool to help bridge the digital divide. And the rules for E-Rate are also technology neutral, allowing schools and libraries to purchase services from satellite operators as well as terrestrial wireless and wireline providers.

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

Sincerely,

  
Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

December 31, 2019

The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1511 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Grijalva:

Thank you for your letter regarding the communications restoration efforts in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria. I appreciate you sharing your insights into Puerto Rico's communications needs in the aftermath of these storms, as well as your suggestions about how to improve recovery and restoration efforts in the future. I agree that it is important to help future-proof Puerto Rico's communications networks.

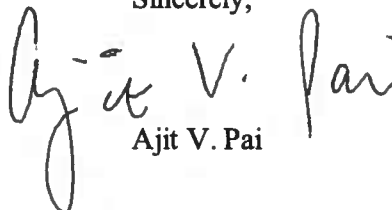
That is why, ever since the 2017 hurricane season, the Commission's energies have been focused on ensuring the recovery and strengthening of Puerto Rico's networks. We created the Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund, which provided more than \$51.2 million in additional funding to facilitate continued network recovery efforts in Puerto Rico in 2018. And we expanded the Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund in 2019, dedicating more than \$500 million over ten years in fixed broadband support and more than \$250 million over three years in mobile broadband support.

These funds are available on a technology neutral basis, including to satellite operators, that are willing to meet the statutory requirement that they offer voice service as an eligible telecommunications carrier. And though federal law gives state commissions, like the Puerto Rico Telecommunications Regulatory Board, the authority to designate eligible telecommunications carriers, Congress reserved authority for the Commission to do so when state commissions cannot—an authority that the Commission has exercised repeatedly when needed.

Your letter also notes that the damage wrought by the 2017 hurricanes continues to impact schools in remote or rural areas in Puerto Rico that are participating in the E-Rate program. I share your view that an effective E-Rate program—one that promotes better connectivity for students and library patrons alike—can be a powerful tool to help bridge the digital divide. And the rules for E-Rate are also technology neutral, allowing schools and libraries to purchase services from satellite operators as well as terrestrial wireless and wireline providers.

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

Sincerely,

  
Ajit V. Pai