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For Immediate Release

**CHAIRMAN PAI LAUNCHES THE
KEEP AMERICANS CONNECTED PLEDGE**

*Pai Calls on Broadband and Telephone Service Providers to Promote Connectivity for
Americans Impacted by the Disruptions Caused by the Coronavirus Pandemic*

WASHINGTON, March 13, 2020—Yesterday, in multiple phone calls with broadband and telephone service providers and trade associations, Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai emphasized the importance of keeping Americans connected as the country experiences serious disruptions caused by the coronavirus outbreak. And in order to ensure that Americans do not lose their broadband or telephone connectivity as a result of these exceptional circumstances, he specifically asked them to take the Keep Americans Connected Pledge.

The Keep Americans Connected Pledge reads as follows:

Given the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on American society, [[Company Name]] pledges for the next 60 days to:

- (1) not terminate service to any residential or small business customers because of their inability to pay their bills due to the disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic;
- (2) waive any late fees that any residential or small business customers incur because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and
- (3) open its Wi-Fi hotspots to any American who needs them.

Less than 24 hours after the Chairman's calls, the following companies have already told Chairman Pai that they are taking the Keep Americans Connected Pledge and will implement it as soon as possible: ACIRA – Powered by Farmers Mutual Telephone Company & Federated Telephone, Allstream Business US, AlticeUSA, Antietam Broadband, Atlantic Broadband, AT&T, BBT, BOYCOM Vision, Burlington Telecom, Cable One, Central Arkansas Telephone Cooperative, CenturyLink, Charter, Cincinnati Bell, Citizens Connected, Comcast, Consolidated Communications, Cox Communications, Digital West, East Ascension Telephone Company, Education Networks of America, Emery Telecom, Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative, FirstLight, Frontier, Google Fiber, Grande Communications, Granite Telecommunications, Great Plains Communications, GWI, Hiawatha Broadband, Hill Country, IdeaTek Telcom, Inteliquent, Lafourche Telephone Company, Lakeland Communications, Long Lines Broadband, Mammoth Networks/Visionary Broadband, Mediacom, MetTel, Nex-Tech, Ninestar Connect, Northwest Fiber, Orbital Communications, Pioneer Communications, Premier Communications, Range Telephone

Cooperative, RCN, Reserve Telephone Company, Sacred Wind Communications, Shawnee Communications, Socket Telecom, Sonic, Sprint, Starry, TDS Telecom, TelNet Worldwide, T-Mobile, TracFone Wireless, Uniti Fiber, US Cellular, Vast Broadband, Verizon, Vyve Broadband Investments, Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom, Wave Broadband, West Telecom Services, Windstream, and ZenFi Networks. And the trade associations ACA Connects, Competitive Carriers of America, CTIA, INCOMPAS, NCTA—The Internet and Television Association, NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association, USTelecom, and WISPA have all endorsed the pledge.

“As the coronavirus outbreak spreads and causes a series of disruptions to the economic, educational, medical, and civic life of our country, it is imperative that Americans stay connected. Broadband will enable them to communicate with their loved ones and doctors, telework, ensure their children can engage in remote learning, and—importantly—take part in the ‘social distancing’ that will be so critical to limiting the spread of this novel coronavirus,” said Chairman Pai. “That’s why I’m asking all broadband and telephone service providers to take the Keep Americans Connected Pledge. I don’t want any American consumers experiencing hardships because of the pandemic to lose connectivity.

“I applaud those companies that have already taken the Keep Americans Connected Pledge. They are stepping up to the plate and taking critical steps that will make it easier for Americans to stay connected during this pandemic and maintain much-needed social distancing. I urge other companies to join them. This may be a difficult time for our nation, but if we all work together, I am confident that we can rise to the challenge.”

In addition to the Keep Americans Connected Pledge, Chairman Pai commended companies that have already taken additional steps to ensure that Americans, especially low-income American families and veterans, remain connected. He exhorted those companies with low-income broadband programs like the Connect2Compete program to expand and improve them (for example, by increasing speeds to 25/3 Mbps and expanding eligibility) and those without to adopt such programs. He also called on broadband providers to relax their data cap policies in appropriate circumstances, on telephone carriers to waive long-distance and overage fees in appropriate circumstances, on those that serve schools and libraries to work with them on remote learning opportunities, and on all network operators to prioritize the connectivity needs of hospitals and healthcare providers.

Chairman Pai also continued the Commission’s ongoing discussions with service providers regarding their efforts to ensure that changes in usage patterns occurring during the pandemic do not impair network performance, as well as their plans to ensure network resiliency.

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