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For Immediate Release

**CHAIRMAN PAI HEARS FROM BROADBAND AND
TELEPHONE SERVICE PROVIDERS THAT TRAFFIC IS UP
BUT NETWORKS ARE PERFORMING WELL**

*Network Traffic Has Increased with
Spike in Suburban, Exurban, and Daytime Usage*

WASHINGTON, April 2, 2020—Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai spoke yesterday with broadband and telephone service providers and trade association leaders about the state of American communications networks as volume and usage patterns shift during the coronavirus pandemic. The Chairman heard from providers across the country who reported network usage had risen about 20-35% for fixed networks and 10-20% for cellular networks in recent weeks, with increased demand in suburban, exurban, and residential areas and during daytime hours. In general, company representatives reported that their networks were holding up quite well, and they expected that resilience to continue. This is consistent with what the Chairman heard during a similar call led by the President on Tuesday.

“It appears that our nation’s communications networks are holding up very well amid the increase in traffic and change in usage patterns. That’s thanks in part to networks being designed to handle ever-higher peak traffic loads and in part to a market-based regulatory framework that has promoted infrastructure investment and deployment. That said, we will continue to closely monitor the situation,” said Chairman Pai. “I thank these companies for finding ways to meet changing demand and working with us to keep Americans connected. I also heard about how the FCC’s recent actions have helped companies serve their consumers, such as granting additional spectrum capacity for wireless networks. I also want to thank communications workers who are on the front lines for their efforts in helping Americans get connected, stay connected, and troubleshoot any problems during these challenging times.”

In their conversation with Chairman Pai, no providers expressed concern about their networks’ ability to hold up to increased and changing demand. Operators cited a general migration of traffic to suburban, exurban, and residential areas as more people work, learn, and access services from home during the pandemic. They said they would continue to monitor hotspots to be ready for any issues and proactively increase capacity in case peak traffic rises unexpectedly. There was strong confidence in how well the network backbone was meeting the needs of increased demand. Companies have seen some spikes in new customers signing up for services and an increased reliance on phone calls—with some calling traditional voice service the “new killer app.”

Chairman Pai thanked trade association leaders for reporting helpful, nationwide data on their websites and thanked carriers for providing this data. This includes:

- NCTA’s dashboard: <https://www.ncta.com/COVIDdashboard>

- USTelecom’s network performance page: <https://www.ustelecom.org/research/network-performance-data/>
- CTIA’s network performance page: https://www.ctia.org/the-wireless-industry/managing_our_wireless_networks-covid-19

The Chairman also thanked broadband and telephone service providers for taking his Keep Americans Connected Pledge. By taking the Pledge, a broadband or telephone service provider commits for 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. To date, more than 650 broadband and phone providers have signed the Pledge and many have gone above and beyond this commitment. More information is available here: <https://www.fcc.gov/keep-americans-connected>.

The Chairman’s call with trade associations included ACA Connects, Cloud Communications Alliance, Competitive Carriers Association, CTIA—The Wireless Association, INCOMPAS, NCTA—The Internet & Television Association, NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association, Rural Wireless Association, Satellite Industry Association, USTelecom, Wireless Infrastructure Association, Wireless Internet Service Providers Association, and Western Telecommunications Alliance.

The Chairman’s call with companies included Altice USA, AT&T, CenturyLink, Charter, Cincinnati Bell, Consolidated Communications, Comcast, Cox, DISH, Frontier, Hughes, Mediacom, Northwest Fiber, Sprint, T-Mobile, TDS Telecom, TracFone, U.S. Cellular, Verizon, ViaSat, and Windstream.

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