

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Modernizing and Expanding Access to the 70/80/90 GHz Bands*, WT Docket No. 20-133; *Amendment of Part 101 of the Commission's Rules to Facilitate the Use of Microwave for Wireless Backhaul and Other Uses and to Provide Additional Flexibility to Broadcast Auxiliary Service and Operational Fixed Microwave Licensees*, WT Docket No. 10-153; *Aeronet Global Communications Inc. Petitions for Rulemaking to Amend the Commission's Allocation and Service Rules for the 71-76 GHz, 81-86 GHz, and 92-95 GHz Bands to Authorize Aviation and Maritime Scheduled Dynamic Datalinks*, RM-11824, RM-11825; and *Requests of Aviat Networks and CBF Networks, Inc. d/b/a Fastback Networks for Waiver of Certain Antenna Requirements in the 71-76 and 81-86 GHz Bands*, WT Docket No. 15-244 (Terminated)

For many, the '70s, '80s, and '90s were the time of the Bee Gees, U2, and Nirvana. These decades gave us *Star Wars*, *Back to the Future*, and of course, *The Big Lebowski*. And even if a few might still cherish a pet rock, a pair of parachute pants, or a power bead bracelet, most people, by and large, put those decades to productive use.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the 70, 80, and 90 GHz bands. In many parts of the country, these spectrum bands are either underused or unused entirely. At a time when wireless airwaves elsewhere are filling up as demand continues to surge, we need to find ways to make more productive use of our spectrum resources. That's why today we start a proceeding aimed at revitalizing the 70, 80, and 90 GHz bands and expanding their use for services such as 5G backhaul and broadband to ships and aircraft.

As we pursue 5G deployment, it's important to remember that networks rely on many components to function optimally. You don't just need a solid wireless connection between your smartphone and a base station. You also need reliable backhaul to ferry data back and forth from the edge of the network to its core. That's where the 70, 80, and 90 GHz bands can be helpful. These high-frequency bands can enable the use of small antennas that are less costly and visually intrusive than traditional wireless backhaul. So today, we propose targeted changes to our rules governing these bands, including modifications to our antenna standards and our processes for registering links.

We also explore allowing point-to-point mobile service in these bands to provide broadband to ships and aircraft. Anyone who has traveled frequently knows that broadband service on airplanes or cruise ships can be expensive, unreliable, or at times not available at all. Opening up these bands for broadband service to known, movable locations could help keep travelers connected by creating a more technologically advanced and competitive market for air and sea connectivity. Finally, as with all proceedings that consider new spectrum uses, we must be mindful of the needs of incumbent licensees, including government users. Therefore, we seek comment on proposed mitigation measures so that all users can make productive use of these bands without harmful interference.

We look forward to building a thorough record on how to promote more productive use of these bands and enhance broadband connectivity. The decades of the '70s, '80s, and '90s may be in the rearview mirror, but with the right regulatory framework, the 70, 80, and 90 GHz bands can help us look forward to a more innovative wireless future.

Thanks to the staff who worked on this item. From the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Ken Baker, Peter Daronco, Anthony Patrone, Blaise Scinto, Sean Spivey, Donald Stockdale, Cecilia Sulhoff, Joel Taubenblatt, and Jeff Tignor; from the Office of Engineering and Technology, Brian Butler, Jamie Coleman, Michael Ha, Ira Keltz, and Aspa Paroutsas; from the Office of Economics and Analytics,

Kate Matraves, Gary Michaels, Emily Talaga, and Aleks Yankelevich; from the Office of General Counsel, David Horowitz, Doug Klein, and Bill Richardson; from the International Bureau, Jose Albuquerque, Jennifer Gilsean, Nese Guendelsberger, Dante Ibarra, and Bob Nelson; from the Enforcement Bureau, Ricardo Durham, Shannon Lipp, David Marks, Neal McNeil, Joy Ragsdale, and Josh Zeldis; and from the Office of Communications Business Opportunities, Chana Wilkerson and Sanford Williams.