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For Immediate Release

FCC AUTHORIZES \$237.9 MILLION TO EXPAND, IMPROVE, AND HARDEN MOBILE BROADBAND NETWORKS IN PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Includes First Universal Service Funding Targeted Specifically for 5G Deployment

WASHINGTON, June 15, 2020—The Federal Communications Commission today approved \$237.9 million in funding over three years to expand, improve, and harden mobile broadband networks in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Specifically, in Stage 2 of the Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund and Connect USVI Fund, the FCC authorized \$233.9 million to three carriers serving Puerto Rico and \$4 million to one carrier serving the U.S. Virgin Islands. This includes approximately \$59.5 million in funding specifically devoted to deploying 5G networks in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, the first universal service funding the Commission has awarded anywhere in the country that is targeted for 5G deployment.

“Over two years ago, communications infrastructure in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands was devastated by Hurricanes Irma and Maria,” said FCC Chairman Ajit Pai. “The Commission acted quickly to direct Universal Service Fund support to help restore communications networks damaged by the hurricanes. And through today’s action, we are taking a major step toward expanding, improving, and hardening mobile broadband networks on the islands. I’m especially pleased that we are providing the first universal service funding ever specifically targeted for the deployment of 5G networks so that consumers in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands will benefit from the next generation of wireless connectivity.”

The Commission awarded high-cost mobile support to eligible mobile carriers that offered services in the territories prior to the hurricanes in order to expand and harden 4G LTE networks and deploy next-generation 5G networks. Carriers that elected to receive support were required to submit a detailed disaster preparation and response plan committing to measures and procedures for responding to future disasters. Specifically, the Commission required applicants for the funding to submit plans describing in detail how they would: (1) strengthen infrastructure; (2) ensure network diversity; (3) ensure backup power; (4) monitor networks; and (5) prepare for emergencies.

After reviewing these plans, the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau approved approximately \$97.8 million for AT&T, \$76.6 million for Puerto Rico Telephone Company, and \$59.6 million for T-Mobile in Puerto Rico, and \$4.0 million for AT&T in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Through actions taken in the immediate aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria as well as Stage 1 of the Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund and Connect USVI Fund, the Commission has

already provided approximately \$130 million in extra universal service funding to carriers providing fixed and mobile broadband service in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Additional high-cost support to the territories for fixed voice and broadband services will be awarded separately through a competitive process later this summer.

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