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**For Immediate Release****FCC ACTS TO ENSURE CRITICAL WIRELESS INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS CONTINUE TO PROCEED DURING PANDEMIC*****Agency Announces Processes for Identifying Emergency Wireless Infrastructure Projects for Expedited Historic Preservation Review***

WASHINGTON, June 25, 2020—The Federal Communications Commission has been working throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that critical communications infrastructure projects continue to proceed at a time when so many Americans are relying on high-speed Internet services. Today, the FCC announced a process that has been developed in coordination with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation that will further expedite the process for reviewing those infrastructure builds. This additional process allows wireless licensees to request expedited review for essential and immediate projects that respond to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as emergency authorization for infrastructure projects critical for responding to the pandemic.

“Internet connectivity is more important than ever,” said FCC Chairman Ajit Pai. “Americans rely on broadband to telework, take classes online, consult with doctors remotely, and stay in touch with loved ones they can’t see in person. Wireless infrastructure has connected consumers and delivered a lot of value during this pandemic, and the processes announced today will ensure that urgently needed projects can move forward.”

“I am incredibly proud of the work FCC staff have been doing to ensure that critical communications infrastructure projects proceed during this COVID-19 pandemic,” said FCC Commissioner Brendan Carr, who has led the Commission’s wireless infrastructure modernization efforts. “I want to commend the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as well for working with us to develop these processes that will ensure that even more Americans can realize the benefits that a high-speed Internet connection can deliver.”

In April, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation notified federal agencies that historic preservation deadlines are tolled when a state or Tribal review office has closed and is unable to respond in a timely fashion due to the COVID-19 emergency. Since then, Commission staff has been in regular communication with affected Tribal partners to offer support and with industry to facilitate communications deployments during the pandemic. Many historic preservation review offices have resumed operations, but some urgently needed proposed deployments remain indefinitely delayed.

Today’s public notice from the FCC’s Wireless Telecommunications Bureau announces two processes for licensees in the midst of urgently needed infrastructure projects, some of which otherwise would be indefinitely delayed by historic preservation review office closures. First, FCC licensees may request expedited historic preservation review of projects that are essential

and immediate and that respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, FCC licensees may request emergency authorization if a project addresses public safety or critical infrastructure initiatives prioritized by government or public safety authorities, brings coverage to meet the needs of unserved and underserved areas due to COVID-19 effects, or relieves network congestion due to COVID-19 effects. The FCC has coordinated the process with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and conducted outreach to all Tribes whose review offices remain closed about the need to move forward with emergency authorizations for urgently needed infrastructure projects.

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*This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).*