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For Immediate Release

CHAIRMAN PAI ANNOUNCES STAFF CHANGES

Baker and Spivey Join Office of the Chairman

WASHINGTON, August 7, 2020—Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai today announced two new additions to his office, three departures, and an expanded role for one of his current advisors.

C. Sean Spivey is joining the Office of the Chairman as Wireless and International Advisor, replacing Aaron Goldberger, who is returning to the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau. Allison Baker is joining the Office of the Chairman as Economic Advisor. The Chairman’s current Rural Broadband Advisor Preston Wise is taking on an expanded portfolio as the new Wireline Advisor, replacing Nirali Patel, who is returning to the Wireline Competition Bureau. And Melissa Kirkel, who has been on detail in the Office of the Chairman as Special Counsel focusing on wireline issues, also is returning to the Wireline Competition Bureau. These changes will go into effect at the beginning of next week.

“I continue to be impressed by the depth of talent we have at the FCC and the number of outstanding public servants who are willing to take on new challenges when asked to serve,” said Chairman Pai. “Sean is a highly esteemed telecommunications expert, and his proven track record of legal and policy work on complex wireless issues will be a great asset to our team. Allison is an outstanding economist, and I look forward to working closely with her to continue implementing policies that will promote investment, innovation, and competition. I’m also grateful to Preston for his willingness to take on an expanded role and continue his excellent work to expand broadband deployment in rural America.”

Mr. Spivey is joining the Office of the Chairman from the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, where he has served as Legal and Policy Advisor to the Bureau Chief. Prior to that, he was a senior associate in the Washington, D.C. office of Hogan Lovells US LLP, where he focused on telecommunications matters. He also worked at the Competitive Carriers Association and a law firm in Houston, Texas. He earned his law degree from Oklahoma City University School of Law and his bachelor’s from St. Edward’s University in Austin, Texas.

Ms. Baker is joining the Office of the Chairman from her position as Economic Advisor to the Chief of the FCC’s Wireline Competition Bureau. She came to the FCC in 2012, working on data and economics projects in WCB’s Telecommunications Access Policy Division and in the FCC’s former Office of Strategic Planning & Policy Analysis. She earned her bachelor’s degree in economics from Colorado State University and her master’s degree in economics from Georgia State University. She is also currently enrolled in Catholic University’s Columbus School of Law.

Mr. Wise has served in the Office of the Chairman since October 2018, most recently as Rural Broadband Advisor, after serving as an attorney-advisor in WCB’s Telecommunications

Access Policy Division. Before joining the Commission in January 2017, he worked as an attorney for a firm in Bismarck, North Dakota. He earned his law degree from George Mason University's Antonin Scalia Law School and his bachelor's degree in economics from North Dakota State University.

Chairman Pai added: "I also want to take a moment to thank two outstanding colleagues whom I am sad to see depart our office: Nirali Patel and Aaron Goldberger. Nirali's incredible work on vital and complex issues like establishing 988 as the three-digit number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, ensuring a successful transition of the local number portability administrator contract, and addressing national security threats to our nation's communications network supply chain has been critical in helping the Commission advance the public interest. As for Aaron, with skill and patience, he has led our massive and complex wireless and international policy agendas, excelling at every task put before him. Aaron's work has been critical to our efforts to free up more spectrum for 5G, including the incredibly complex C-band proceeding, and Wi-Fi, including the 6 GHz proceeding. Aaron also played a major role in helping to advance our spectrum priorities on the international stage. I count both Nirali and Aaron as great friends and I sincerely thank them for their service."

Ms. Patel [joined](#) the Office of the Chairman in January 2018 and served most recently as Wireline Advisor to the Chairman. She previously worked as a Legal Advisor to Commissioner Brendan Carr, served as a Deputy Division Chief in the Wireline Competition Bureau's Competition Policy Division, and was in private practice before joining the Commission. She graduated summa cum laude from the American University Washington College of Law and received her undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Mr. Goldberger [joined](#) Chairman Pai's office in April 2019. Before that, he was an Associate Bureau Chief in the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and Deputy Director of the Rural Broadband Auction Task Force. He has now served in the Offices of three FCC Chairmen and one Commissioner as well as worked in the Wireline Competition Bureau and Office of Legislative Affairs. He earned his bachelor's degree from Michigan State University and law degree from the Indiana University Mauer School of Law.

Regarding Ms. Kirkel's return to the Bureau, Chairman Pai remarked: "Melissa is a great asset to the Commission, and it has been a pleasure to have had the chance to work with her over the past two months. I thank her for stepping up during this detail and excelling in the role."

Ms. Kirkel has been detailed to the Office of the Chairman for the last two months and focused on wireline issues, primarily establishing 988 as a nationwide three-digit number to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and toll-free access charge reform. She has been with the FCC for more than a decade, originally joining through the Attorney Honors Program. She earned her bachelor's degree from Yale University and her law degree from Boston University. She will be returning to her prior position as Deputy Division Chief in the Wireline Competition Bureau's Competition Policy Division.

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