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For Immediate Release

**CHAIRMAN PAI APPLAUDS COMMUNICATIONS PROVISIONS OF
THE CORONAVIRUS RELIEF AND OMNIBUS FUNDING
LEGISLATION**

***Bill Includes \$1.9 Billion for “Rip and Replace” as well as Mapping, Telehealth,
Keeping Americans Connected, and Other Provisions Called for by Chairman Pai***

WASHINGTON, December 21, 2020—Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai issued the following statement:

“I applaud Congress for including in the coronavirus relief and omnibus funding legislation a number of provisions that advance critical national priorities in communications policy. I am pleased, for example, that Congress is providing the FCC with \$1.9 billion to fund the program that we adopted earlier this month to ‘rip and replace’ insecure equipment in our nation’s communications networks. This program will strengthen both network security and our national security. In addition, this legislation gives the FCC the funding we need to implement our Digital Opportunity Data Collection; this is a critical step toward the FCC being able to implement both Phase II of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund as well as the 5G Fund for Rural America that the Commission adopted earlier this year, which together will offer over \$20 billion to support high-speed broadband in rural America. I would like to thank Chairman Wicker, in particular, for his strong leadership in securing this funding.

“Building on our successful COVID-19 Telehealth Program, I’m also pleased that Congress has provided the Commission with an additional \$250 million for that program, which will allow us to approve many more applications to expand connected care throughout the country and enable patients to access necessary health care services while staying safe. Furthermore, I am glad that Congress has responded to my call from this past June to provide funding to Keep Americans Connected during the pandemic. The \$3.2 billion contained in this legislation will leverage private efforts to ensure low-income American families and veterans are connected, and will facilitate remote learning by funding connected devices for low-income American students.

“Moreover, I welcome Congress both requiring the FCC to begin auctioning the 3.45-3.55 GHz band by the end of 2021 and repealing the mandate to auction the T-band. These provisions will ensure that the Commission and the federal government as a whole stay on track in quickly making the 3.45 GHz band available for 5G and that the FCC does not have to waste resources on a T-band auction that was bound to fail. Finally, I’m glad that this legislation contains a number of provisions to combat 911 fee diversion.

“I salute Congressional leaders for working together in a bipartisan manner to reach agreement on this consequential legislation that will help protect our national security, close the digital

divide, advance telehealth, and promote American leadership in 5G. The FCC will act quickly to implement the bill's important provisions once it is adopted and signed into law.”

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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).