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**For Immediate Release**

**FCC SEEKS COMMENT ON OPEN RADIO ACCESS NETWORKS**

WASHINGTON, March 17, 2021—The Federal Communications Commission today adopted a Notice of Inquiry to start a formal discussion on the opportunities and potential challenges presented by open and virtualized radio access networks, and how the FCC might leverage these concepts to support network security and 5G leadership. The FCC seeks comment on the current status of development and deployment, whether and how the FCC might foster the success of these technologies, and how to support competitiveness and new entrant access to this emerging market.

The Open Radio Access Networks (Open RAN) concept promotes the use of open interface standards in the portion of the telecommunications network that connects wireless devices—like mobile phones—to the core of the network. This can be implemented in vendor-neutral hardware and software-defined technology based on open interfaces and standards. In addition, Open RAN allows disaggregation of the radio access network, which can enable the use of interchangeable technologies that promote network security and public safety. The FCC is seeking input from academics, industry, and the public on what steps are required to deploy Open RAN networks broadly and at scale.

The Notice of Inquiry seeks comment on the current status of Open RAN development and deployment in networks in the US and abroad. It asks about the role of established large manufacturers and new entrants in setting standards for this new network architecture. It seeks input on what steps should be taken by the FCC, federal partners, industry, academia, and others to accelerate the timeline for Open RAN standards development. Further, it seeks comment on any challenges or other considerations related to the deployment, integration, and testing of systems based on Open RAN specifications. The NOI also requests comment on the costs and benefits associated with Open RAN development and deployment.

The FCC's Technological Advisory Committee, a group of industry representatives that provides technical advice to the Commission, recently recommended that the Commission encourage the development of the Open RAN ecosystem by supporting Open RAN innovation, standardization, testing, and security and reliability. The Commission also hosted a Forum on 5G Open Radio Access Networks in September 2020.

Action by the Commission March 17, 2021 by Notice of Inquiry (FCC 21-31). Acting Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, and Simington approving. Acting Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr and Starks issuing separate statements.

GN Docket No. 21-63

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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).*