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For Immediate Release

FCC APPROVES FURTHER SUPPORT FOR STRENGTHENING NETWORKS IN PUERTO RICO AND THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Extends Universal Service Support for Mobile and Fixed Providers Beyond 2023 While Funds Transition

WASHINGTON, April 19, 2023—The Federal Communications Commission today adopted an Order that continues efforts to bolster mobile and fixed voice and broadband services throughout Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands by ensuring universal service support will go to harden and strengthen networks as part of the Bringing Puerto Rico Together Fund and the Connect USVI Fund.

“These programs have helped make tremendous progress toward restoring networks battered by Hurricanes Maria and Irma in 2017,” said **Chairwoman Rosenworcel**. “The job is not done, as we learned from the devastation of recent hurricanes like Hurricane Fiona in 2022. Today’s action will support ongoing work to restore, harden, and expand critical communications infrastructure to keep communities connected and protected against future extreme weather events.”

Current recipients of mobile support have the opportunity to receive a portion of their current support for up to 24 months. The support must be used to strengthen 4G LTE or 5G-NR networks. In addition, while new high-cost supported networks are being deployed, the Commission extends, until December 31, 2025, the phase-down of fixed support in areas where incumbents did not win competitive Stage 2 fixed funding. Providers may only use the support for redundancy and resiliency measures to help ensure critical telecommunications networks remain operational during times of disasters and must submit a spending plan on how the funding will be used.

The FCC also denied an Application for Review from the Puerto Rico Telephone Company challenging the awarding of support for select areas in Stage 2 of the Bringing Puerto Rico Together Fund.

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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).