

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER AJIT V. PAI**

Re: *Utilizing Rapidly Deployable Aerial Communications Architecture in Response to an Emergency*, PS Docket No. 11-15

The Communications Act begins by observing that the Federal Communications Commission was created in part “for the purpose of promoting safety of life and property through the use of wire and radio communications.” 47 U.S.C. § 151. I am pleased that the first item I have the privilege of supporting at a Commission meeting fulfills this core purpose. The failure of terrestrial infrastructure following an emergency can leave a dangerous gap in communications capabilities. Deployable aerial communications architectures (DACA) have the potential to fill this gap. The action we take today is particularly timely considering recent experiences during emergencies and Americans’ increasing reliance on communications services.

Following adoption of the Notice of Inquiry, the agency will benefit from robust participation by all stakeholders. Commission decisions are always better informed by a thorough record, of course, but this matter presents policy questions which call for an especially strong factual foundation. For instance, what are the advantages and disadvantages of various DACA technologies, and are particular solutions better suited for use in different parts of the country? What lessons does the military’s experience with DACA suggest with respect to civilian use? What is the best approach to operational concerns such as the use of commercial bands, interference, and frequency coordination? To what extent could DACA be deployed along American borders consistent with existing agreements with Canada and Mexico? It is my hope that the record ultimately developed in this proceeding will reflect a full airing of views on these and other issues.

Once the record is complete, I will work with the Chairman, my fellow Commissioners, and the talented staff in the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau who worked on this item (as well as the White Paper which inspired this proceeding) to take appropriate action. We should do what we can to enable emergency management officials, first responders, industry personnel, and the public to communicate when existing networks are destroyed or damaged. We may not know when or where the next emergency will happen, but we can be sure that communications services will be vital to helping those in need.