

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER AJIT PAI**

*Re: Implementing Public Safety Broadband Provisions of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, PS Docket No. 12-94; Implementing a Nationwide, Broadband, Interoperable Public Safety Network in the 700 MHz Band, PS Docket No. 06-229; Service Rules for the 698–746, 747–762, and 777–792 MHz Bands, WT Docket No. 06-150.*

Last year, Congress required the Commission to grant a license to the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) for the purpose of establishing “a *nationwide*, interoperable public safety network.”<sup>1</sup> In order to ensure that this network truly would be nationwide and not leave rural America behind, Congress obligated FirstNet to undertake, “consistent with the license” granted by the Commission, “deployment phases with substantial rural coverage milestones as part of each phase of the construction and deployment of the network.”<sup>2</sup>

Because FirstNet must demonstrate to the Commission in its license renewal application that it “has met the duties and obligations set forth under th[e] Act,”<sup>3</sup> I believe that the Commission has the statutory authority to impose rural coverage conditions on FirstNet’s license. While today’s Notice of Proposed Rulemaking indicates that the Commission currently does not intend to specify any such conditions, I will approach the record that will be compiled on this issue with an open mind and encourage rural stakeholders to weigh in with their views. In reaching a final decision, we must balance the need to provide FirstNet with sufficient flexibility with our responsibility to safeguard fellow citizens who live in rural areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, Pub. L. No. 112-96, 126 Stat. 156, § 6202(a) (emphasis added).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* § 6206(b)(3).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* § 6201(b)(2).