

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER AJIT PAI**

RE: *Amendment of Part 2 of the Commission's Rules for Federal Earth Stations Communicating with Non-Federal Fixed Satellite Service Space Stations; Federal Space Station Use of the 399.9–400.05 MHz Band; Allocation of Spectrum for Non-Federal Space Launch Operations, ET Docket No. 13-115; RM-11341.*

50 years ago this month, the last of our country's pioneering Mercury astronauts went into space. His name was Gordon Cooper, and his "Faith 7" spacecraft orbited the Earth 22 times. "Gordo" was the first American to sleep in space, and he would go on to be played memorably on the silver screen by Dennis Quaid in "The Right Stuff." Back then, in the 1960s, space was a big deal. The United States launched rockets and put a man on the moon. Astronauts were our heroes, and space exploration was a national priority.

Today, space is even more important to the American way of life. Satellites, for example, play a vital role in connecting remote communications links with the network, whether you're a consumer swiping your credit card at a rural gas station or a first responder using a satellite phone to keep working through a disaster. But we just don't think about space that much anymore. Space—it may be the forgotten frontier.

Not after today. With this item, we advance a bevy of proposals with one overarching aim: ensuring the efficient use of spectrum for space-related communications. For instance, I am excited that the Notice proposes to let the federal Argos satellite system use the 399.9–400.05 MHz band. Argos directs its all-seeing eyes on the global ecosystem, and bringing this long-fallow spectrum into use promises better environmental data for American scientists.

Another part of the Notice arises from a quirk of federal law, which divides authority over spectrum use between the FCC and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. The Notice proposes amendments to our Table of Allocations in order to provide interference protection to both federal earth stations operating in commercial spectrum and the commercial space industry operating in federal spectrum. I look forward to reviewing the record that will be compiled in response. And as we move forward, I hope all parties will remain open to ways to resolve these matters informally, perhaps through a Memorandum of Understanding.

I would like to thank Julie Knapp, Geraldine Matisse, Mark Settle, Jamison Prime, and Nick Oros in the Office of Engineering Technology for their work on this item and their thoughtful approach to these issues. We should all be thankful that space remains at the forefront of their minds.