STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER AJIT PAI

Re: *Comprehensive Review of Licensing and Operating Rules for Satellite Services*, IB Docket No. 12-267

Seventy years ago, author Arthur C. Clarke popularized the idea of sending rocket stations up into geostationary orbit to bring radio coverage to the whole world. Just 19 years later in 1964, NASA launched the first such "rocket station" from Cape Canaveral and positioned it 22,236 miles above the Earth's equator near the International Date Line. That satellite, Syncom-3, was the world's first satellite in geostationary orbit. It did what few thought possible in the 1960s—beam the Summer Olympics from Tokyo back to the United States. And it's still around, drifting over the Atlantic Ocean.[1]

Something else that dates back to the 1960s has also been drifting around: the FCC's Part 25 rules governing satellite licensing and operations. When we commenced this proceeding three years ago, I hoped that we would comprehensively rewrite and update those rules to make the United States the most desirable country in the world for licensing and operating satellites.[2] We're now taking action, and greater innovation in orbit is likely to be the result.

There are many changes to be excited about, like new off-axis EIRP density envelopes and expanded routine emission levels for sidelobes in the plane tangent to the GSO arc. But two changes are particularly important to me.

First, I have long called on the Commission to substantially reduce the burden of our milestone review process.[3] Under that process, satellite companies have to submit to cumbersome regulatory review of their business and technical plans and meet certain construction milestones after being granted a license. I was pleased last year when the *Further Notice* included my proposal to "make all interim milestones optional" and adopt escalating bonds in their stead.[4] And I'm delighted that today, we go one step further and eliminate interim milestones entirely.[5] This decision to replace bureaucratic micromanagement with economic incentives will simplify the application process for satellite operators and reduce the burden of oversight on Commission staff, to the benefit of consumers and taxpayers alike.

Second, I suggested last year that we streamline the licensing of small earth stations. As proposed by the Satellite Industry Association, this would allow a licensee to "increase the number of earth stations operating under a blanket license without prior authorization."[6] The *Order* does just that, ending the need for operators to seek the government's permission before serving new customers with an existing service.[7]

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[1] Infosatellites.com, Satellite Tracking, Prediction and Informations about Objects in the Sky: Syncom-3, http://www.infosatellites.com/syncom3-satellite-tracking-norad-858.html.

[2] *Comprehensive Review of Licensing and Operating Rules for Satellite Services*, IB Docket No. 12-267, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 27 FCC Rcd 11619, 11709 (2012) (Statement of Commissioner Ajit Pai).

[3] *Comprehensive Review of Licensing and Operating Rules for Satellite Services*, IB Docket No. 12-267, Report and Order, 28 FCC Rcd 12403, 12515–16 (2013) (Statement of Commissioner Ajit Pai) (expressing "hope the Further Notice will consider . . . Boeing's recommendation to reduce the burden of our milestone review process").

[4] *Comprehensive Review of Licensing and Operating Rules for Satellite Services*, IB Docket No. 12-267, Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 29 FCC Rcd 12116, 12130, para. 34 (2014) (*Further Notice*).

[5] *See Order* at paras. 49–90.

[6] *Further Notice*, 29 FCC Rcd 12159, para. 149; *see also id.* at 12238 (Statement of Commissioner Ajit Pai).

[7] *See Order* at para. 291.

Credit for these achievements goes to the Commission's dedicated staff. I extend my gratitude to José Albuquerque, Clay DeCell, Steve Duall, Jerry Duvall, Chip Fleming, Diane Garfield, Jennifer Gilsenan, Kerry Murray, Steve Spaeth, and Troy Tanner. Thank you for your continued dedication and service to the American public on the ground and out in space.