

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Comment Sought on Draft Program Comment for the Federal Communications Commission's Review of Collocations on Certain Towers Constructed without Documentation of Section 106 Review, Accelerating Wireless Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers to Infrastructure Investment*, WT Docket No. 17-79

Similar to the vampires in the *Twilight* series, for many of us at the Commission, Twilight Towers has seemed like an issue that would never die. But no more. Today, I am pleased that after more than a decade, the FCC is finally moving forward to address this longstanding problem.

By way of background, Twilight Towers were erected between 2001 and 2005, when there were no clear Commission guidelines for adherence to historic preservation laws. Since then, wireless providers have been unable to collocate new antennas on these towers without going through extensive historic preservation review. This is because they lack the documentation to prove the underlying tower is compliant with guidelines that were put in place after they were erected and therefore cannot qualify for an exemption for new collocations. This is unfair and costly, and it also makes it more difficult for service providers to improve wireless coverage.

Despite efforts by my predecessors over the years to make progress on this issue, the Commission previously had not taken the concrete action necessary to moving forward. So earlier this year, we teed up the issue again in an NPRM looking at various ways to reduce barriers to wireless infrastructure deployment.

And today, we break the logjam.

After many discussions with Tribal representatives, industry, and other interested stakeholders, it is now clear that it is up to the FCC, working with our colleagues at the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), to finally solve this problem. And none too soon; the more rapidly we enable additional use of this infrastructure, the sooner consumers everywhere can benefit from next-generation wireless services. It is my hope that this issue will be wrapped up, at long last, by the middle of next year.

I appreciate the engagement of ACHP staff on this issue and look forward to working with them as we advance this and other wireless infrastructure issues. I also would like to thank my colleagues for their support of this item. In particular, thanks to Commissioner O'Rielly, who has long called for a resolution to this issue, and to Commissioner Carr for his continued leadership on our wireless infrastructure reform docket. And last but certainly not least, thanks to the staff who worked on this item: Paul D'Ari, Garnet Hanly, Eli Johnson, Daniel Margolis, Dana Shaffer, Jill Springer, Jeffrey Steinberg, Donald Stockdale, Cecilia Sulhoff, Suzanne Tetreault, and Mary Claire York from the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau; Janet Sievert from the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau; and Deborah Broderson, Linda Oliver, and Bill Richardson from the Office of General Counsel.