

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Revisions to Public Inspection File Requirements – Broadcaster Correspondence File and Cable Principal Headend Location*, MB Docket No. 16-161.

A few years ago, I visited KKOW-FM in Pittsburg, Kansas. It's one of the radio stations I listened to a lot growing up. During my visit, the station's staff showed me an imposing series of huge file cabinets filled with folders, each folder stuffed with paper. It was the station's public inspection files, dating back many years. When I asked how often members of the public came to inspect them, they laughed—I was the first that anyone could remember, and they had been with the station a long time. What they didn't laugh about was the burden of maintaining all that paper. KKOW is a small station, and its staff are stretched thin handling programming, sales, technical matters, and . . . paperwork.

That last factor is something that falls within our bailiwick here at the FCC. We are fully ensconced in the digital age, but our rules still require many regulated entities to put a priority on pulp. That's why I'm pleased that this *Order* takes a few steps—simple ones, perhaps, but important ones—toward modernizing our rules to match today's realities.

In particular, we amend our public inspection file rules to eliminate two requirements: (1) that commercial broadcast stations retain copies of letters and emails from the public; and (2) that cable operators maintain for public inspection the designation and location of a cable system's principal headend. These measures follow directly from Commissioner O'Rielly's diligent work to identify unnecessary paperwork burdens. In all, this action reduces regulatory burdens on commercial broadcasters and cable operators without adversely affecting the public interest.

Let me expand a bit on that last point about the public interest as it concerns broadcasters. There is little, if any, connection between the correspondence file requirement and its purported goal of ensuring that a station serves its local community. After this decision, television viewers and listeners will still be able to communicate directly with a station by letter, email, or through social media. The public will continue to be able to file petitions or objections concerning a television station licensee's performance at the time the station files its renewal application. Stations will still have every incentive to serve their communities in an increasingly competitive marketplace. In short, getting rid of this requirement will simply allow commercial broadcasters, like the hardworking folks I met at KKOW, to transition to an entirely online public file and send those clunky file cabinets packing.

This *Order* also eliminates the requirement that cable operators disclose headend location information in their public inspection files. This will improve security at local stations and principal headend locations, since there is no legitimate need for the public to know the location of a cable system's principal headend. This *Order* also makes clear that cable operators must provide principal headend location information to the FCC, broadcasters, and franchisors upon request. Alternatively, cable operators have the option of posting such information in their online public file if they so desire.

I'd like to thank the Media Bureau staff who worked on this item, including Mary Beth Murphy, Martha Heller, Kim Matthews, and Sean Mirzadegan. And my gratitude extends as well to Bill Lake, the FCC's longtime Media Bureau Chief, a dedicated public servant to whom we bid a fond farewell today—his last day at the FCC.