

**STATEMENT OF  
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Amendment of Section 73.3556 of the Commission's Rules Regarding Duplication of Programming on Commonly Owned Radio Stations*, MB Docket No. 19-310; *Modernization of Media Regulation Initiative*, MB Docket No. 17-105.

In 1992, Barcelona hosted the 25<sup>th</sup> Summer Olympics, Bill Clinton was elected President of the United States, Quentin Tarantino released his first film, *Reservoir Dogs*—and the FCC adopted the current version of Section 73.3556, which prohibits certain commonly-owned radio stations from airing duplicative programming. Six Summer Olympics, three Presidents, and eight<sup>1</sup> Tarantino movies later, the duplicative programming rule lingers on.

This rule was meant to promote competition, programming diversity, and spectrum efficiency. But in the last generation, there have been massive changes in the radio marketplace. Over the past 27 years, the number of commercial AM, FM, and FM translator stations has nearly doubled, from 11,600 to 19,400. The number of non-commercial education stations has more than doubled, from 1,588 to 4,122. And the Commission has since established the low power FM service, which comprises over 2,000 hyper-local stations providing unique and hyper-local content. We've also seen broadcasters use online platforms to disseminate content and entirely new entrants such as Spotify and Pandora emerge as sources of audio entertainment. Suffice to say, these developments have yielded competition, diversity, and spectrum efficiency in the radio industry.

Which brings us to ask: Is this rule still necessary? And if so, should it be modified? Consistent with the overall theme of our *Modernization of Media Regulation Initiative*, we're kicking off this proceeding in order to answer these questions.

I want to thank the Commission staff that prepared this item: from the Media Bureau, Michelle Carey, Brendan Holland, Julie Saulnier, and Sarah Whitesell, and from the Office of General Counsel, David Konczal, Bill Richardson, and Royce Sherlock.

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<sup>1</sup> "How Many Films Has Quentin Tarantino Made (& Why Does He Count It Wrong?)," available at <https://screenrant.com/quentin-tarantino-movies-how-many/>.