

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Auction of Priority Access Licenses for the 3550-3650 MHz Band; Comment Sought on Competitive Bidding Procedures for Auction 105; Bidding in Auction 105 Scheduled to Begin June 25, 2020, AU Docket No. 19-244*

On this date in 1969, the Beatles' album *Abbey Road* was released. The lead song of that album, "Come Together," was the subject of much controversy. Did Paul McCartney sing backup on the verses, or did John Lennon dub over them? Why did John take over the electric piano riffs from Paul on the final recording? Was there a political inspiration for the song? Did John borrow from Chuck Berry's "You Can't Catch Me"? But while John and Paul and others debated, even litigated, these questions, "Come Together" took off, reaching number 1 in the United States and number 4 in the United Kingdom.

Fifty years later, we come together today to seek comment on the procedures for the 3.5 GHz auction and take another step forward in our work to promote American leadership in 5G wireless services. Making more spectrum available for the commercial marketplace is a central plank of our 5G FAST Plan. We've already completed two successful high-band spectrum auctions this year. And on December 10, we will start an incentive auction in the upper 37 GHz, 39 GHz, and 47 GHz bands; this will be the largest spectrum auction in U.S. history, with 3,400 megahertz available.

But a key Commission priority regarding spectrum has also been to free up more mid-band spectrum for next-generation wireless services. A good example is the 2.5 GHz band. With almost 200 megahertz, it's the largest contiguous band of terrestrial, flexible use spectrum below 3 GHz in the United States. And this summer, the FCC majority finally liberalized the rules for the band, allowing more entities to access the spectrum, eliminating unnecessary restrictions, and moving toward an auction next year of wide swaths of unused spectrum in the band. We're also working on the complicated task of freeing up spectrum for 5G in the 3.7-4.2 GHz band, commonly called the C-Band. This is going to be a critical band for 5G, and I'm optimistic that later this fall we'll be voting on an order to make a significant amount of spectrum in the C-Band available for 5G.

But today we come together to focus on the 3.5 GHz band. Like the 2.5 GHz band, the 3.5 GHz band is prime mid-band spectrum that holds particular promise for 5G. But when I became Chairman, we didn't have the right rules in place to encourage 5G deployment in the band. However, thanks to Commissioner O'Rielly's leadership, last year we changed key characteristics of the band's Priority Access Licenses and our approach to competitive bidding. These reforms have made 3.5 GHz licenses much more appealing for 5G operations and will encourage the rapid deployment of next-generation wireless networks in the band.

Moreover, together with stakeholders, we've been doing the hard work necessary to make the band's unique dynamic sharing model work. And just last week, we reached a milestone, as the Commission authorized five Spectrum Access System administrators to begin initial commercial deployments in the band. This is great news, and together with this Public Notice, it makes September a big month for the 3.5 GHz band. It also means that auction winners should be well-positioned to start providing service in the band quickly.

I thank Commissioner O'Rielly and his staff again for their efforts. And thanks also to the staff who worked on this item: Craig Bomberger, Jonathan Campbell, Rita Cookmeyer, Patrick DeGraba, Ian Forbes, Jill Goldberger, Amanda Hilfiger, William Huber, Shabnam Javid, Mary Lovejoy, Giulia McHenry, Gary Michaels, Kelly Quinn, Linda Sanderson, Debbie Smith, Martha Stancill, Sue Sterner, and Margaret Wiener from the Office of Economics and Analytics; Keith Harper, Chris Miller, Roger Noel, Matthew Pearl, Paul Powell, Milton Price, Jessica Quinley, Rebecca Schwartz, Dana Shaffer, Sean Spivey, Donald Stockdale, Cecilia Sulhoff, and Joel Taubenblatt from the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau; David Horowitz, Anjali Singh, and Bill Richardson from the Office of the General Counsel;

LaVonia Proctor from the Office of the Managing Director; and Chana Wilkerson and Sanford Williams from the Office of Communications Business Opportunities.