

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *In the Matter of Amendment of Parts 2 and 25 of the Commission’s Rules to Enable GSO Fixed-Satellite Service (Space-to-Earth) Operations in the 17.3-17.8 GHz Band, to Modernize Certain Rules Applicable to 17/24 GHz BSS Space Stations, and to Establish Off-Axis Uplink Power Limits for Extended Ka-Band FSS Operations*, IB Docket No. 20-330, RM-11839.

The U.S. commercial satellite industry has enjoyed substantial growth in recent years, dominating market share for satellite manufacturing and launch services in 2019.¹ Satellite launches are on the rise, as are throughput speeds and data capacity. Indeed, as we enter a new space age, one might say that “the sky’s the limit” in terms of satellite systems’ potential for expanding connectivity and bridging the digital divide.

This investment and innovation in space-based services has led to increased demand for spectrum to be used by satellite systems. As a result, ensuring that we have efficiently allocated sufficient spectrum for satellite services is vital to this industry’s continued success. Today, we advance this objective by initiating a proceeding aimed at permitting Geostationary Orbit (or GSO) space stations in the Fixed Satellite Service to use the 17.3–17.7 GHz band on a co-primary (or co-equal) basis for downlink communications, as well as the neighboring 17.7–17.8 GHz band for FSS downlink communications on a non-protected basis. Combined, these changes would increase intensive and efficient use of the 17.3–17.8 GHz band by expanding downlink capacity for high-throughput satellite communications. This should facilitate the deployment of advanced satellite systems that will benefit all Americans.

Consumers stand to benefit from expanded use of the 17.3–17.8 GHz band and the routine processing of applications for licenses. The satellite industry is expected to continue growing at a record-setting pace, and the Commission’s proposed changes would help operators to hit the ground running with greater spectrum flexibility and a streamlined licensing process that is focused on getting Americans connected at greater speeds and lower costs.

For their hard work on this NPRM, I would like to thank—from the International Bureau: Jose Albuquerque, Curtrisha Banks, Diane Garfield, Jennifer Gilsean, Neşe Guendelsberger, Karl Kensinger, Robert Nelson, Sean O’More, Tom Sullivan, Merissa Velez, and Jay Whaley; from the Enforcement Bureau: Jason Koslofsky, Shannon Lipp, Paul Noone, Salomon Satche, and Josh Zeldis; from the Office of Economics and Analytics: Ginny Metallo and Emily Talaga; from the Office of Engineering and Technology: Michael Ha, Tom Mooring, Nick Oros, Jamison Prime, and Ron Repasi; from the Office of the General Counsel: David Konczal and Bill Richardson; from the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau: Steve Buenzow, Tim Hilfiger, John Schauble, Blaise Scinto, Joel Taubenblatt, and Steve Zak.

¹ Satellite Industry Association, *Satellite Industry Grows at Record-Setting Pace* (July 2, 2020), <https://sia.org/satellite-industry-grows-at-record-setting-pace-and-dominates-global-space-economy/>.