

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Amendments to Part 4 of the Commission's Rules Concerning Disruptions to Communications*, PS Docket No. 15-80; *Petition of California Public Utilities Commission and the people of the State of California for Rulemaking on States' Access to the Network Outage Reporting System ("NORS") and a Ruling Granting California Access to NORS*, RM No. 11588 (terminated).

Over the last five years, the United States has experienced 69 billion-dollar disasters, affecting millions of Americans and, in some cases, displacing entire communities. Our experience with these disasters has taught us the importance of knowing the operational status of communications services in an impacted area. That information is critical to developing an effective emergency response, restoring communications, and ultimately saving lives. That's why today, we are proposing new rules to enable more public entities to access network outage information collected by the Commission.

In this *Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, we build upon two mechanisms already in place to gather information about the reliability and security of the nation's communications infrastructure: the Network Outage Reporting System, or NORS, and the Disaster Information Reporting System, or DIRS. We already have rules on the books that require communications providers to report network service disruptions or outages by filing electronically in NORS. And, in times of crisis, such as hurricanes and earthquakes, communications providers may use DIRS to voluntarily report outage information.

But here's the concern: Other than the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, federal and state agencies currently do not have direct access to information from NORS or DIRS. Instead, they can only review aggregate data—information that isn't specific to any company. As I've heard firsthand in areas like Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, specific information is essential to help those on the front lines respond to a disaster, whether it's a major hurricane, earthquake, or wildfire.

This *Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* would address that gap. It proposes a framework to provide state and federal agencies—including Tribal entities—with access to granular and actionable outage information contained in NORS and DIRS. At the same time, we're also proposing several safeguards to preserve the presumptively confidential treatment of NORS and DIRS data and protect national security. For example, we sensibly propose that only officials who demonstrate a "need to know" may have access to such information and that access to these filings be permitted in a read-only format.

I'd like to thank the FCC staff who worked on this item: Michael Caiafa, Rochelle Cohen, Lisa Fowlkes, John Healy, Jennifer Holtz, Nicole McGinnis, Saswat Misra, Austin Randazzo, Julia Tu, and Brenda Villanueva of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau; Matthew Duchesne of the Consumer and Government Affairs Bureau; Jason Koslofsky of the Enforcement Bureau; Kenneth Lynch and Chuck Needy of the Office of Economics and Analytics; David Horowitz, Joel Rabinovitz, Bill Richardson, and Anjali Singh of the Office of General Counsel; Chana Wilkerson of the Office of Communications Business Opportunities; Rebekah Douglas and Dangkhua Nguyen of the Wireline Competition Bureau; and Sean Spivey of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau. And more generally, I fully support our stalwart staff in the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau who are responsible for faithfully executing this agency's emergency management and response duties 24/7. Through actual storms or political maelstroms, your commitment and resolve never waver. You remind me every day of what it means to serve and protect the American people, and I'm privileged to be your co-worker.