

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Amendment of the Commission's Rules Governing Standards for Hearing Aid-Compatible Handsets*, WT Docket No. 20-3; *Amendment of the Commission's Rules Governing Hearing Aid-Compatible Mobile Handsets*, WT Docket No. 07-250 (terminated); *Comment Sought on 2010 Review of Hearing Aid Compatibility Regulations*, WT Docket No. 10-254 (terminated)

Once upon a time, hearing aids and wireless handsets were like oil and water; they just didn't mix. Interference between a phone and a hearing aid could cause an audible buzz or other noise that made it difficult to hear the conversation. To solve that problem, and to give hearing aid users access to the same types of advanced phones available to others, the Commission for many years has required manufacturers and wireless service providers to make available wireless handsets that are compatible with hearing aids. Those rules have been a tremendous success. Today, manufacturers report that more than 92% of new handset models are hearing-aid compatible.

However, the Commission has long recognized that its hearing aid compatibility rules must keep up with the times. Currently, under our regulations, a 2011 American National Standards Institute (ANSI) testing standard is used to determine whether a handset is hearing aid-compatible. But now there is a more modern testing standard available, one issued by ANSI in late 2019. We therefore propose to transition to this newer standard, which should bring benefits to handset users and industry alike. For instance, ANSI reports that the new testing standard was designed to support newer technologies and devices, and it addresses volume control for the first time. And the 2019 standard is consistent with international standards, which should reduce burdens on manufacturers. This sounds like a win for all involved, literally so for the most important stakeholders in this proceeding—consumers who are hard-of-hearing.

Many thanks to the hard work of our dedicated staff on this item. From the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Chas Eberle, Garnet Hanly, Saurbh Chhabra, Eli Johnson, Susannah Larson, Dana Shaffer, Jiaming Shang, Don Stockdale, Cecilia Sulhoff, and Suzanne Tetreault; from the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, Robert Aldrich, Darryl Cooper, and Suzy Rosen Singleton; from the Office of Economics and Analytics, Weiren Wang; from the Office of General Counsel, David Horowitz, Douglas Klein, and William Richardson; and from the Office of Engineering and Technology, Rashmi Doshi and Jim Szeliga.