

**STATEMENT OF  
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Promoting Broadcast Internet Innovation through ATSC 3.0*, MB Docket No. 20-145.

Many of a certain age remember the days when families would argue about who should have to get up to adjust the rabbit ears in order to improve TV reception. Thankfully, broadcast television has come a long way since then. Over a decade ago, we transitioned from analog to digital. And today, we are on the precipice of yet another leap in broadcasting innovation—ATSC 3.0. Having previewed it myself during a trip to Phoenix, Arizona, I can confirm that we’re no longer in the era of grainy episodes of “Love Boat.”

In 2017, the FCC majority authorized broadcast innovation through ATSC 3.0, or next-generation broadcast TV. Under the ATSC 3.0 technical standard, broadcasters can now provide their traditional, over-the-air services more efficiently using Internet Protocol (IP)-based technologies. ATSC 3.0 has already been deployed by stations in Portland, Boise, Santa Barbara, Phoenix, Dallas, Orlando, and Las Vegas, and we expect more it to debut in more markets later this year.

The new standard also opens up potentially innovative uses for broadcasters’ spectrum, which can be collectively referred to as “Broadcast Internet.” This fulfills an unrealized promise of the digital TV transition—the use of excess spectrum for supplementary or ancillary services, in addition to traditional video programming. ATSC 3.0 can be used to deliver innovative new services related to automotive transportation, agriculture, distance learning, telehealth, public safety, utility automation, and the Internet of Things, to name a few, not to mention others we haven’t even dreamed of. Our goal should be to ensure that the market—not outdated rules—determines which new services and technologies will succeed.

To accomplish that goal in part, today’s Declaratory Ruling therefore clarifies that long-standing television station ownership restrictions do not apply to the lease of spectrum to provide Broadcast Internet services. This is consistent with the underlying purposes of those rules and makes certain what most already believed to be the case. The accompanying Notice of Proposed Rulemaking asks how the Commission should modify or further clarify our existing rules to further promote Broadcast Internet services. We support entrepreneurial and innovative uses of excess broadcast spectrum created by the transition to ATSC 3.0, and at the same time, we want to continue to promote and preserve free, universally available, local broadcast television.

Thank you to the hard work put in by the Media Bureau team—Ty Bream, Michelle Carey, John Cobb, Brendan Holland, Kim Matthews, Shaun Mauer, Evan Morris, Maria Mullarkey, Julie Salovaara, and Sarah Whitesell; their colleagues from the Office of General Counsel—David Konczal and Bill Richardson; the team from the Office of Economics and Analytics—Eugene Kiselev, Emily Talaga, and Andy Wise; and from the Office of Communications Business Opportunities—Belford Lawson. And a special thank you to Commissioner Carr. Commissioner Carr spearheaded this initiative, and I applaud his leadership and commitment to promoting innovation and ensuring that the future of broadcast TV is as bright as the Love Boat’s lido deck.