

**STATEMENT OF  
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Updating the Commission's Rule for Over-the-Air Reception Devices*, WT Docket No. 19-71

In rural and underserved parts of America, fixed wireless Internet service providers are helping to close the digital divide. According to the Wireless Internet Service Providers Association, its more than 700 service-provider members provision last-mile broadband and voice services to more than six million consumers. Wireless Internet service providers have invested in spectrum, such as through their participation in the Commission's recent auction of Priority Access Licenses in the 3.5 GHz band, and have responded to the growing demand on their networks resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, with more than 100 WISPs receiving Special Temporary Authority from the Commission to use 5.9 GHz band spectrum to expand network capacity. And WISPs aren't just helping to close the digital divide in rural America. Starry, a fixed wireless broadband provider, offers a gigabit-capable service in several major metropolitan cities, including providing 30 Mbps symmetrical speed broadband service to 29,000 units of public and affordable housing for only \$15 per month through its Starry Connect program.

As I have set out in the Commission's 5G FAST Plan, updating the Commission's infrastructure policies is a key component of accelerating deployment of next-generation networks (along with expanding access to spectrum and modernizing regulations to promote fiber deployment). This Report and Order advances this aspect of the 5G FAST Plan in that it provides regulatory parity between the facilities of wireless Internet service providers and those of other service providers. Specifically, we extend the protections afforded to over-the-air reception devices to certain categories of "hub and relay" antennas used for the distribution of broadband-only service to multiple customer locations, so long as the antenna is installed on property within the exclusive use or control of the antenna user where the user has a direct or indirect ownership or leasehold interest in the property.

Our rule change reflects the realities of modern network architecture, including densification of transmission equipment and siting of infrastructure closer to end users, while preserving the rights of property owners or lessees to freely negotiate the terms of antenna placements. Extending OTARD protection to qualifying broadband-only antennas will remove unreasonable barriers to deployment erected by third parties, such as local zoning laws and private restrictive covenants as well as excessive permitting fees. This is common-sense reform that is well within the Commission's legal authority to enact, and it therefore has my full support.

I would like to thank the Commission staff that worked on this item. From the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau: Paul D'Ari, Garnet Hanly, Kari Hicks, Eli Johnson, Georgios Leris, Charles Mathias, Jennifer Salhus, Dana Shaffer, Don Stockdale, and Cecilia Sulhoff; from the Office of Economics and Analytics: Catherine Matraves, Giulia McHenry, and Patrick Sun; from the Office of General Counsel: Mike Carlson, David Horowitz, David Konczal, Thomas Johnson, Bill Richardson, Royce Sherlock, and Anjali Singh; from the Enforcement Bureau: Jason Koslofsky and Janet Moran; from the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau: Gregory Cooke and Barbara Esbin; and from the Office of Communications Business Opportunities: Chana Wilkerson.