

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Toll Free Assignment Modernization*, WC Docket No. 17-192; *Toll Free Service Access Codes*, CC Docket No. 95-155.

This Commission has a history of doing innovative things with auctions. Just last month, we completed the Connect America Fund Phase II reverse auction to allocate nearly \$1.5 billion toward deploying broadband in unserved parts of rural America. This is an important departure from the old way of doing things: It efficiently targets funding where it's needed most and promotes competition.

Of course, until a few decades ago, it was thought to be radical to award spectrum via auctions. But it didn't take long after auctions began in the early 1990s for nearly everybody to concede their wisdom. So far, the FCC has successfully held 90 spectrum auctions. And following our lead, numerous other countries have followed our approach.

So today, I'm excited that we're extending our use of auctions. Currently, toll free numbers are allocated through a system that rewards regulatory arbitrage: The winners are typically those with computer systems that can quickly grab desirable numbers from the toll free number administrator's database. This means numbers might not be put to their highest-valued use. But going forward, we'll let the market allocate more efficiently the roughly 17,000 toll free numbers in the new 833 code—numbers in which many have expressed an interest.

Thank you to the staff who worked tirelessly on this effort: William Andrie, Joseph Calascione, Octavian Carare, Matthew Collins, Alex Espinoza, Heather Hendrickson, Daniel Kahn, Rachel Kazan, Pam Megna, Kris Monteith, Eric Ralph, Michelle Sclater, and Ann Stevens from the Wireline Competition Bureau; Scott Mackoul, Eliot Maenner, Gary Michaels, Martha Stancill, and Margie Weiner from the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau; Larry Atlas, Terry Cavanaugh, Rick Mallen, Linda Oliver, Bill Richardson, and Chin Yoo from the Office of General Counsel; and Evan Kwerel and Paul Lafontaine from the Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Analysis.