

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0603

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March 5, 2019

The Honorable Ajit Pai, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai,

As you know, for decades the Federal Communications Commission and Congress have been examining local television Designated Market Areas and the “orphan counties” that exist within them. These orphan counties are assigned to a television market in one state and their residents live in another state. Coloradans in two orphan counties, La Plata and Montezuma, have long been trying to access their in-state news, weather, and sports.

Following the passage of the Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act Reauthorization (STELAR) in 2014, La Plata County’s October 2016 request for a local market modification was granted by the Chief of the Media Bureau in March 2017. After the local market modification was granted, several Albuquerque broadcast stations filed an Application for Review of the decision. After nearly two years, the decision on the Application for Review is still pending.

I urge the FCC to expedite the decision on the Albuquerque broadcast stations’ Application for Review. La Plata County has worked for years to bring local television to southwest Colorado, and the uncertainty surrounding the Application for Review is detrimental to all impacted parties.

Attached is a letter from La Plata County outlining its desire for the Commission to act in a timely manner. I look forward to reviewing the Commission’s decision. Please do not hesitate to contact my office should you have any questions on this issue.

Sincerely,



Scott Tipton
Member of Congress



La Plata County
Colorado

Board of County Commissioners

Julie Westendorff, Chair • Clyde Church, Vice Chair • Gwen Lachelt, Commissioner

1101 East 2nd Ave
Durango, CO 81301
(970) 382-6219

February 26, 2019

Hon. Ajit Pai, Chairman
Hon. Michael O'Rielly, Commissioner
Hon. Jessica Rosenworcel, Commissioner
Hon. Brendan Carr, Commissioner
Hon. Geoffrey Starks, Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: In the Matter of La Plata County, Colorado, Petitions for Modification of the Satellite Television Markets of KDVR-TV, KCNC-TV, KMGH-TV, and KUSA-TV, Denver, Colorado / MB Docket No. 16-366, CSR No. 8927-A; MB Docket No. 16-367, CSR No. 8928-A; MB Docket No. 16-368, CSR No. 8929-A; MB Docket No. 16-369, CSR No. 8930-A

Dear Chairman Pai and Commissioners:

As you may know, La Plata County, Colorado is in the Albuquerque direct market area and does not receive Denver or other Colorado broadcast television stations. As an "orphan" county, our citizens suffer from not getting Colorado news coverage and related programming. The County filed the above proceeding in October 2016 requesting a market modification, and that request was granted by the Chief of the Media Bureau on March 1, 2017. However, a number of Albuquerque broadcast stations filed an Application for Review of that decision in late March of 2017, and while the matter is pending, no Denver broadcast stations or satellite companies have been willing to negotiate carriage agreements to facilitate this programming in La Plata County.

We know that this Commission has advocated for all levels of government to act in a timely manner with respect to decisions related to communications matters within their jurisdictions, and we write today to urge you strongly to please take prompt action to deny the Applications for Special Review and affirm the decision of the Media Bureau. The citizens of La Plata County have waited for almost two years for the Commission to act, and we continue to suffer the effects of being an orphan county, as noted in the Bureau Chief's Report and Order.

Please take action to affirm that decision and help facilitate La Plata County's access to the Colorado broadcast programming that all other Colorado citizens currently enjoy.

Thank you.


Sincerely,

LA PLATA COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Julie Westendorff
Chair

Clyde Church
Vice Chair



Gwen Lachelt
Commissioner

cc: Hon. Michael Bennet, United States Senate
 Hon. Cory Gardner, United States Senate
 Hon. Scott Tipton, United States House of Representatives
 Hon. Jared Polis, Governor of Colorado
 Hon. Phil Weiser, Colorado Attorney General
 Michelle M. Carey, Bureau Chief, Media Bureau



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 25, 2019

The Honorable Scott Tipton
U.S. House of Representatives
218 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Tipton:

Thank you for your letter regarding the pending Application for Review involving La Plata County's market modification petition. I understand how important in-state local news and information is to American consumers, including those who live in an "orphan county" such as La Plata County in Colorado.

The Media Bureau is actively reviewing the Application for Review, and I have asked staff to provide recommendations for the full Commission's consideration as soon as possible. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ajit V. Pai".

Ajit V. Pai