

November 14, 2017

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

Dear Chairman Pai:

We encourage the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to accelerate the deployment of advanced networks to all Americans. However, we have concerns that the Commission will vote on an item this week that could harm consumers. It is critical that as we work to enhance networks across the country, we protect existing service for consumers during and after technology transitions.

As currently drafted, the *Accelerating Wireline Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers to Infrastructure and Investment* Report and Order lessens notifications to consumers about changes to their landline service (virtually eliminating advance notice of copper retirement to retail customers), eliminates the "de facto" retirement rule, and changes the definition of "service" to reduce access to critical communications for consumers in an attempt to lessen regulatory barriers on phone service providers. These changes cause serious concern for rural Americans including the elderly, low-income, and consumers living with disabilities who rely on landline phone service.

As you know, millions of people and businesses, not to mention critical U.S. government operations, across the nation rely on legacy landline phone service. Individuals in rural America, particularly those living where cell phone service is poor, utilize these landlines to conduct business, reach emergency responders, and stay in touch with loved ones. Households and businesses in our states, and across the country, cannot afford the disruption of having service altered without adequate advance notice, the assurance that an equivalent replacement exists, and a clear understanding of how to obtain and use the replacement.

Furthermore, this order would affect more than landline phone service. Alarm systems, fax machines, and medical monitoring devices frequently depend on access to landline service. DSL broadband service also relies on landline phone service. If phone lines are not maintained, all of these services could be put in jeopardy. We need a reliable service standard in place to ensure that services people depend on will continue to work, and that rural Americans will not be left behind during this technology upgrade, furthering the digital divide.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We hope to work with you to further advance the benefits of next generation technology to all Americans.

Sincerely,



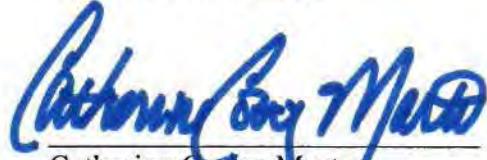
Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



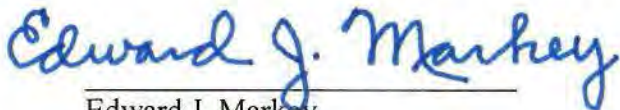
Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



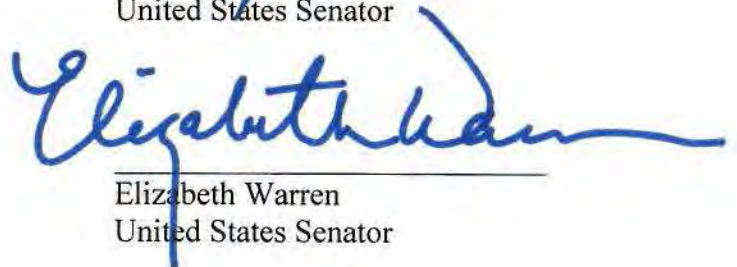
Al Franken
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 9, 2018

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

Thank you for your letter about the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to accelerate wireline broadband deployment to all Americans. As you know, we are amidst a transformation of American communications networks, as more and more consumers move away from using traditional telephone services provided over copper wires and towards incorporating into every aspect of their lives services provided over next-generation technologies. For consumers and the country, making that leap from legacy services provided over 20th century copper-based networks to IP-based services riding over a fiber network is the key to bridging the digital divide.

But that digital opportunity is denied when the FCC's rules force carriers to maintain the networks of yesteryear. Unneeded regulations deter many companies from investing in these new networks. Having to maintain two networks—one legacy, one modern—diverts resources away from new deployments. By definition, every dollar spent propping up fading infrastructure is a dollar that can't be spent on tomorrow's technologies.

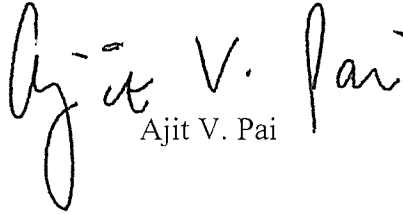
On November 16, 2017, the Commission adopted a Report and Order in the *Accelerating Wireline Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers to Infrastructure Investment* proceeding. The Report and Order takes several actions designed to accelerate the deployment of next-generation networks and services that should particularly benefit rural America by improving the business case for building out rural broadband. Indeed, coupled with our recent reforms to inject over \$500 million into rural broadband deployment for small carriers and our upcoming \$2 billion Connect America Fund Phase II auction this summer, I believe that reducing the cost of deploying and maintaining next-generation networks in rural America will make a big impact for those who have waited far too long for 21st century service.

I agree with you that we must protect consumers during and after technology transitions—and our rules continue to do just that. Should a carrier seek to stop offering traditional telephone service or reduce that service through a de facto copper retirement, the Commission's rules *still* require that carrier to provide advance notification to affected customers and to seek Commission permission through the section 214 discontinuance of service process. Our rules *still* ensure that replacement services are compliant with 911 obligations and accessible to individuals with disabilities. And the record confirms that alarm systems, fax machines, and medical monitoring devices *still* continue to work over fiber facilities—and that next-generation

networks dramatically expand the competitive choices for consumers for these very services (and many others).

I appreciate your interest in this matter. I look forward to continuing to work with you and my colleagues at the Commission to further advance the benefits of next generation technology to all Americans. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 9, 2018

The Honorable Bernard Sanders
United States Senate
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Sanders:

Thank you for your letter about the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to accelerate wireline broadband deployment to all Americans. As you know, we are amidst a transformation of American communications networks, as more and more consumers move away from using traditional telephone services provided over copper wires and towards incorporating into every aspect of their lives services provided over next-generation technologies. For consumers and the country, making that leap from legacy services provided over 20th century copper-based networks to IP-based services riding over a fiber network is the key to bridging the digital divide.

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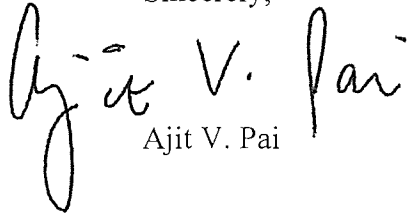
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 9, 2018

The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senate
B40A Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cortez Masto:

Thank you for your letter about the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to accelerate wireline broadband deployment to all Americans. As you know, we are amidst a transformation of American communications networks, as more and more consumers move away from using traditional telephone services provided over copper wires and towards incorporating into every aspect of their lives services provided over next-generation technologies. For consumers and the country, making that leap from legacy services provided over 20th century copper-based networks to IP-based services riding over a fiber network is the key to bridging the digital divide.

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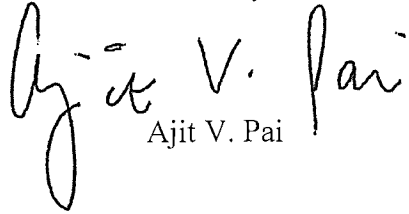
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 9, 2018

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Schumer:

Thank you for your letter about the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to accelerate wireline broadband deployment to all Americans. As you know, we are amidst a transformation of American communications networks, as more and more consumers move away from using traditional telephone services provided over copper wires and towards incorporating into every aspect of their lives services provided over next-generation technologies. For consumers and the country, making that leap from legacy services provided over 20th century copper-based networks to IP-based services riding over a fiber network is the key to bridging the digital divide.

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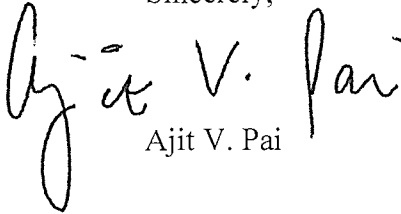
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 9, 2018

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
United States Senate
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Markey:

Thank you for your letter about the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to accelerate wireline broadband deployment to all Americans. As you know, we are amidst a transformation of American communications networks, as more and more consumers move away from using traditional telephone services provided over copper wires and towards incorporating into every aspect of their lives services provided over next-generation technologies. For consumers and the country, making that leap from legacy services provided over 20th century copper-based networks to IP-based services riding over a fiber network is the key to bridging the digital divide.

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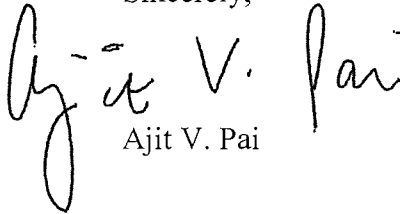
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 9, 2018

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
United States Senate
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Warren:

Thank you for your letter about the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to accelerate wireline broadband deployment to all Americans. As you know, we are amidst a transformation of American communications networks, as more and more consumers move away from using traditional telephone services provided over copper wires and towards incorporating into every aspect of their lives services provided over next-generation technologies. For consumers and the country, making that leap from legacy services provided over 20th century copper-based networks to IP-based services riding over a fiber network is the key to bridging the digital divide.

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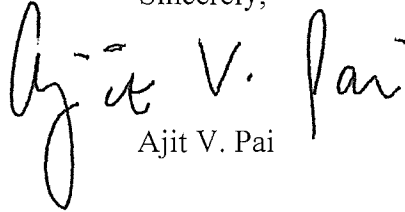
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 9, 2018

The Honorable Gary Peters
United States Senate
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Peters:

Thank you for your letter about the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to accelerate wireline broadband deployment to all Americans. As you know, we are amidst a transformation of American communications networks, as more and more consumers move away from using traditional telephone services provided over copper wires and towards incorporating into every aspect of their lives services provided over next-generation technologies. For consumers and the country, making that leap from legacy services provided over 20th century copper-based networks to IP-based services riding over a fiber network is the key to bridging the digital divide.

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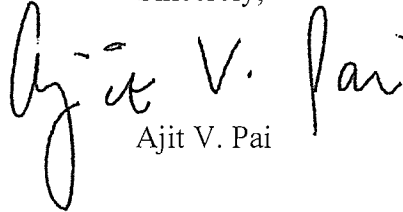
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Ajit V. Pai



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THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 9, 2018

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senate
506 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Shaheen:

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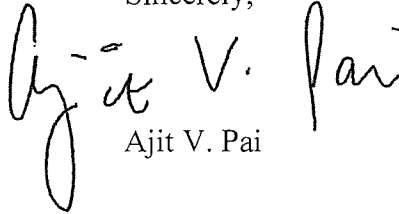
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 9, 2018

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senate
478 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Gillibrand:

Thank you for your letter about the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to accelerate wireline broadband deployment to all Americans. As you know, we are amidst a transformation of American communications networks, as more and more consumers move away from using traditional telephone services provided over copper wires and towards incorporating into every aspect of their lives services provided over next-generation technologies. For consumers and the country, making that leap from legacy services provided over 20th century copper-based networks to IP-based services riding over a fiber network is the key to bridging the digital divide.

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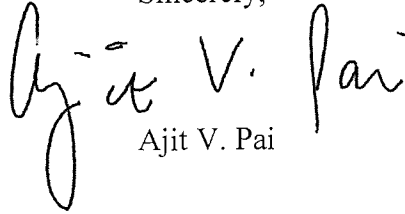
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 9, 2018

The Honorable Maggie Hassan
United States Senate
B85 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hassan:

Thank you for your letter about the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to accelerate wireline broadband deployment to all Americans. As you know, we are amidst a transformation of American communications networks, as more and more consumers move away from using traditional telephone services provided over copper wires and towards incorporating into every aspect of their lives services provided over next-generation technologies. For consumers and the country, making that leap from legacy services provided over 20th century copper-based networks to IP-based services riding over a fiber network is the key to bridging the digital divide.

But that digital opportunity is denied when the FCC's rules force carriers to maintain the networks of yesteryear. Unneeded regulations deter many companies from investing in these new networks. Having to maintain two networks—one legacy, one modern—diverts resources away from new deployments. By definition, every dollar spent propping up fading infrastructure is a dollar that can't be spent on tomorrow's technologies.

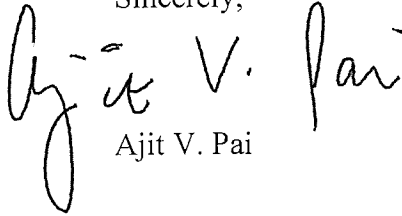
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I agree with you that we must protect consumers during and after technology transitions—and our rules continue to do just that. Should a carrier seek to stop offering traditional telephone service or reduce that service through a de facto copper retirement, the Commission's rules *still* require that carrier to provide advance notification to affected customers and to seek Commission permission through the section 214 discontinuance of service process. Our rules *still* ensure that replacement services are compliant with 911 obligations and accessible to individuals with disabilities. And the record confirms that alarm systems, fax machines, and medical monitoring devices *still* continue to work over fiber facilities—and that next-generation

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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 9, 2018

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate
706 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

Thank you for your letter about the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to accelerate wireline broadband deployment to all Americans. As you know, we are amidst a transformation of American communications networks, as more and more consumers move away from using traditional telephone services provided over copper wires and towards incorporating into every aspect of their lives services provided over next-generation technologies. For consumers and the country, making that leap from legacy services provided over 20th century copper-based networks to IP-based services riding over a fiber network is the key to bridging the digital divide.

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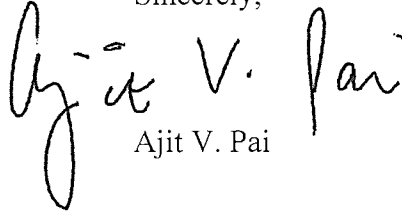
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 9, 2018

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

Thank you for your letter about the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to accelerate wireline broadband deployment to all Americans. As you know, we are amidst a transformation of American communications networks, as more and more consumers move away from using traditional telephone services provided over copper wires and towards incorporating into every aspect of their lives services provided over next-generation technologies. For consumers and the country, making that leap from legacy services provided over 20th century copper-based networks to IP-based services riding over a fiber network is the key to bridging the digital divide.

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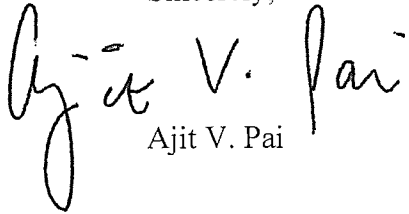
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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 9, 2018

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
United States Senate
713 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Brown:

Thank you for your letter about the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to accelerate wireline broadband deployment to all Americans. As you know, we are amidst a transformation of American communications networks, as more and more consumers move away from using traditional telephone services provided over copper wires and towards incorporating into every aspect of their lives services provided over next-generation technologies. For consumers and the country, making that leap from legacy services provided over 20th century copper-based networks to IP-based services riding over a fiber network is the key to bridging the digital divide.

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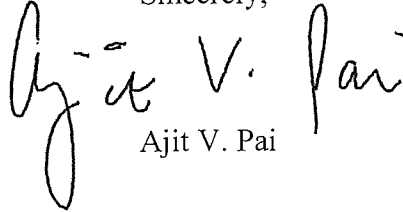
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 9, 2018

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
United States Senate
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Baldwin:

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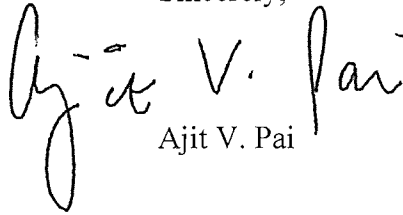
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 9, 2018

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
United States Senate
G12 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Duckworth:

Thank you for your letter about the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to accelerate wireline broadband deployment to all Americans. As you know, we are amidst a transformation of American communications networks, as more and more consumers move away from using traditional telephone services provided over copper wires and towards incorporating into every aspect of their lives services provided over next-generation technologies. For consumers and the country, making that leap from legacy services provided over 20th century copper-based networks to IP-based services riding over a fiber network is the key to bridging the digital divide.

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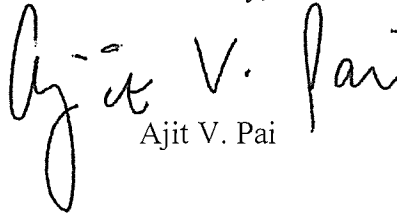
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Ajit V. Pai