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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,  
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEBSITE: <http://commerce.senate.gov>

June 27, 2018

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The Honorable Ajit Pai  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> St., SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

I understand that the FCC is considering, as part of its efforts to facilitate broadband deployment, "one-touch, make-ready" proposals that would allow companies seeking to add equipment to a utility pole to move existing telephone, cable and utility company equipment already located on those poles. Under this proposal, contractors, rather than employees of companies that own equipment already on poles, would be permitted to move existing equipment in order to prepare for installation of new broadband equipment.

I appreciate the value of streamlining broadband network deployment on existing utility poles and how such streamlining can advance deployment of high-speed internet networks in unserved and underserved areas. However, such streamlining must be done in a way that balances safety, minimizes service outages and preserves skilled jobs. Unsafe or improper handling of equipment on poles can create safety hazards and can lead to service interruptions. Employees of the companies that own existing equipment attached to utility poles are in the best position to know what equipment is currently installed and how to move it safely. These companies have the trained and qualified workforce needed to conduct make-ready work in the safest way possible. Furthermore, having contractors perform this work may affect collective bargaining agreements involving communications workers in Florida and around the country.

As the FCC works to ensure that all Americans have access to high-quality, affordable broadband, I ask that any utility pole make-ready policy that the FCC adopts ensures that companies which own equipment already attached to utility poles maintain control over who is permitted to move such equipment. The consequences of a make-ready system that bypasses existing companies with attachments could be very serious, both for workers responsible for the make-ready work and the public at large.

Sincerely,



BILL NELSON  
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable John Thune, Chairman



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

August 10, 2018

The Honorable Bill Nelson  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United States Senate  
425 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Nelson:

Thank you for your letter on pole attachments and "one-touch make-ready" (OTMR) proposals. My highest priority is making sure every American who wants high-speed Internet access can get it. But the plain reality is that if you live in rural America, you are much less likely to have high-speed Internet access than if you live in a city. If you live in a low-income neighborhood, you are less likely to have high-speed Internet access than if you live in a wealthier area. To change that, we need massive investment to construct, expand, and improve wired and wireless networks. And to spur that investment, the FCC needs to remove outdated and unnecessary barriers.

At our August 2 meeting, the FCC did just that by adopting an OTMR regime for the vast majority of attachments governed by federal law. Recommended by the Commission's Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee, OTMR promises to substantially lower the cost and shorten the time to deploy broadband on utility poles. It allows a new provider who wants to attach to a pole to move all the wires and equipment in just one "touch." It's a bit like having to go to the grocery, the dry cleaner, and the bank. The slow way to do this would be to visit each business but return home each time. The rational thing we all do is to do each errand, one after the other, all on one trip. That's essentially what OTMR is.

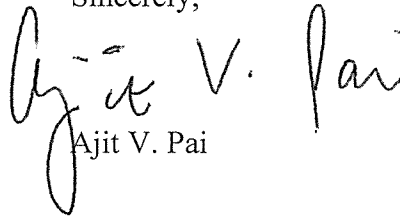
By making it quicker and cheaper to attach to poles, we can accelerate network buildout and make it easier for new entrants to provide more broadband competition. We included safeguards to protect the public and worker safety and excluded from OTMR new attachments that are more complicated or above the "communications space" of a pole, where safety and reliability risks are greater. We also respected existing collective bargaining agreements, allowing union labor to be present for survey and make-ready work and to conduct post-make-ready inspections through such contracts with existing attachers. Based on the record, we expect the OTMR regime to speed broadband deployment without substantial service interruptions or danger to the public or workers. As Google Fiber has put it, our efforts will "remove obstacles that reduce choice and competition for broadband consumers."

In short, this Commission is heading forward, not backward. We're favoring competition, not the status quo. We're pressing for gigabit fiber, not fading copper. We're embracing the promise of new entrants that want nothing more than a chance to compete, not the fears of incumbents who always find a way to say no. It's unfortunate that this decision wasn't

unanimous, but nonetheless we are optimistic about the positive impact our decision will have on millions of Americans who want better, faster, and cheaper Internet access.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ajit" being the most prominent part, followed by "V." and "Pai".

Ajit V. Pai