STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER AJIT PAI

Re: *Revision of Part 15 of the Commission's Rules to Permit Unlicensed National Information Infrastructure (U-NII) Devices in the 5 GHz Band*

I love Wi-Fi. And so does the American public. Consumer demand for high-speed, wireless broadband is expected to increase nine-fold over the next four years, with 64 percent of mobile data traffic handled by Wi-Fi and small cell networks. That means our Wi-Fi routers will have to handle about 4.8 exabytes of data every month in 2018. I know what you're thinking—4.8 exabytes, carry the one—isn't that equivalent to 702 Libraries of Congress every month? And, yes, you'd be right. But you might not realize it's the same amount of data as 11.78 billion episodes of Magnum, P.I. Like Tom Selleck's mustache, that's impressive!

No doubt foreseeing a resurgence in the popularity of '80s television, Congress in 2012 told the Commission to consider additional unlicensed use in the 5 GHz band.[1] The band is tailor-made for the next generation of Wi-Fi. Its propagation characteristics minimize interference in the band. Its wide, contiguous blocks allow for extremely fast connections, with throughput reaching 1 gigabit per second, as I first saw when I visited Qualcomm's headquarters in San Diego in 2012. Because the 802.11ac technical standard is already set, liberalizing our 5 GHz rules can have an immediate impact on the speed and price of consumer devices. And taking this step will allow consumers to make greater use of the hundreds of thousands of Wi-Fi hotspots that the cable industry is deploying throughout the United States.

So I'm pleased to approve today's order, which allows greater unlicensed use of the 5 GHz band. And I'm especially pleased that we are moving forward with revisions to our rules now—on the easier issues presented in the 5 GHz proceeding—rather than waiting until the thornier questions can be resolved. This is precisely the path I outlined for the Commission last summer: raise the power limits for U-NII-1 devices, remove the indoor-only restriction, and harmonize some of our rules for the U-NII bands.[2] I'm glad that my colleagues agreed that it was the right way forward.

But we cannot rest on our laurels. If we're to keep pace with consumer expectations, we need *more* 5 GHz Wi-Fi spectrum, not just better use of existing 5 GHz Wi-Fi spectrum. We must redouble our efforts on making an additional 195 MHz of spectrum available for unlicensed use. Achieving this goal will not be without its challenges; for all the talk of spectrum sharing, the federal government has dragged out the process for evaluating new unlicensed use in the 5 GHz band. But I am confident that common sense will eventually prevail and that consumers at some point will enjoy the greater bandwidth, reduced congestion, and cheaper devices that increased use of the 5 GHz band can bring.

Finally, I would like to thank the Office of Engineering and Technology, especially Julius Knapp, Bruce Romano, Aole Wilkins, Geraldine Matise, Mark Settle, Karen Rackley, and Navid Golshahi. Thank you for your work on this item and for the work you do each day on behalf of the American people.

---

[1] *See* Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, Pub. L. No. 112-96, § 6406, 126 Stat. 156, 231 (2012).

[2] Remarks of FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai, "Looking Back and Looking Ahead: The FCC and the Path to the Digital Economy," at 3 (July 25, 2013), *available at* http://go.usa.gov/WRj4.