

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER AJIT PAI**

Re: Comprehensive Review of Licensing and Operating Rules for Satellite Services, IB Docket No. 12-267

The longest journey begins with a single step, but one step is never enough. Take today's proceeding. It began more than a decade ago, when the staff of the International Bureau first identified the need to streamline and revise our satellite rules as part of our biennial regulatory review process.¹ After years of fits and starts, including staff's reiteration of the need for reform in 2005 and 2007,² the Commission finally heeded those calls last September, when it commenced this rulemaking process.³

Today, just 11 months later, we act on that Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. The sheer breadth of our satellite rules suggests what a striking accomplishment this is. Part 25, which covers satellite communications, has 114 rules spanning 7 subparts and 157 pages. With today's order, we amend the majority of those rules, eliminating some, clarifying others, and consolidating a few more. The end result is a modernized framework that better reflects today's technology and marketplace. That's yeoman's work, and the staff of the International Bureau, as well as their colleagues throughout the Commission that aided in the task, should be proud.

But our labors don't end with today's order. Last September, I called on satellite communications providers and other stakeholders to tell us "not only about the modifications proposed in [the] Notice but also about larger-scale reforms to our satellite licensing and operating rules."⁴ They obliged—I gave up counting the number of proposals proffered once it hit 50. And today, we follow suit. Indeed, we commit to moving forward with a Further Notice to explore more far-reaching changes to our rules, such as EchoStar's recommendation to expand the scope of our rain-fade rules⁵ and SIA's suggestion to target our coordination requirements to those satellites actually affected by an earth station.⁶ And I hope the Further Notice will consider other forward-looking proposals, such as ORBCOMM's recommendation to let the Federal Aviation Administration determine whether certain cargo-tracking devices can be safely operated aboard civil aircraft⁷ and Boeing's recommendation to reduce the burden

¹ Federal Communications Commission, Biennial Regulatory Review 2000 Updated Staff Report at paras. 76–77 (Jan. 17, 2000), available at <http://go.usa.gov/jvpQ>. The Commission promptly followed up on this recommendation, but did not comprehensively revise its rules. See *2000 Biennial Regulatory Review — Streamlining and Other Revisions of Part 25 of the Commission's Rules Governing the Licensing of, and Spectrum Usage by, Satellite Network Earth Stations and Space Stations*, IB Docket No. 00-248, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 15 FCC Rcd 25128 (2000).

² *2004 Biennial Review*, IB Docket No. 04-177, International Bureau Staff Report, 20 FCC Rcd 343 (2005); *2006 Biennial Regulatory Review*, IB Docket No. 06-154, International Bureau Staff Report, 22 FCC Rcd 3138 (2007).

³ *Comprehensive Review of Licensing and Operating Rules for Satellite Services*, IB Docket No. 12-267, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 27 FCC Rcd 11619 (2012).

⁴ *Id.* at 11709 (Statement of Commissioner Ajit Pai).

⁵ EchoStar Comments at 6–7; *Order* at para. 59. Our rain-fade rules allow certain satellite and earth station operators to increase the power of their uplink transmissions when it rains to compensate for increased signal attenuation.

⁶ SIA Comments at 47, 61–62 (discussing modifications to rules 25.138 and 25.223); *Order* at notes 324 and 443.

⁷ See ORBCOMM Comments at 11 (proposing to amend rule 25.285 to replace "installed" with "operated"). Absent such a change, a device covered by rule 25.285 but not installed in the aircraft (such as cargo-tracking devices) could not be used even if the Federal Aviation Administration approved it as safe for aircraft use.

of our milestone review process.⁸ We should commence that rulemaking in the near term, move forward with similar speed, and continue our efforts to make the United States the most desirable country in the world for licensing and operating satellites.

⁸ See Boeing Comments at 4–10; *see also* ORBCOMM Comments at 12; EchoStar Reply at 5–6; Inmarsat Reply at 3; Intelsat Reply at 3–6.