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For Immediate Release

**FCC COMMISSIONER AJIT PAI
AND SOUTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR NIKKI HALEY
*Announce Field Hearing on Contraband Cellphones***

WASHINGTON, February 29, 2016.—On April 6, 2016, FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai will hold a field hearing in Columbia, South Carolina on combating the public safety threats posed by inmates’ use of contraband cellphones. The event will be hosted by Governor Nikki Haley of South Carolina.

“Contraband cell phones are flooding into our nation’s jails and prisons,” Commissioner Pai said. “Inmates are using them to order hits, run drug operations, direct gang activity, and victimize innocent members of the public. We cannot let inmates treat prison as just another base of operations for criminal enterprises. We need to act.”

Commissioner Pai added, “Contraband cellphones pose a serious public safety threat. In South Carolina, for example, a corrections officer was shot six times at his home as part of a plot by inmates using a contraband cellphone. Thankfully, he survived. But incidents like this confirm that we need to take action.”

“I am honored that Governor Haley will be hosting this field hearing,” Commissioner Pai stated. “The Governor and South Carolina’s law enforcement and corrections officials have been on the front lines of the fight against contraband cellphones. I can think of no better place to address this issue.”

The FCC is the U.S. government agency that regulates the nation’s airwaves, including the spectrum that cellphones use. In 2013, the FCC teed up technological solutions and regulatory reforms that could help prevent the use of contraband cellphones. To date, it has not taken further action in that rulemaking. This field hearing aims to reboot the conversation and build the foundation for a robust FCC response.

Additional information about the event, including a list of panelists, will be provided in the coming days.

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