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For Immediate Release

**JOINT STATEMENT OF FCC CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI AND ACTING FTC
CHAIRMAN MAUREEN K. OHLHAUSEN ON PROTECTING
AMERICANS' ONLINE PRIVACY**

WASHINGTON, March 1, 2017 – FCC Chairman Ajit Pai and Acting FTC Chairman Maureen K. Ohlhausen issued the following statement today on the FCC's issuance of a temporary stay of a data security regulation:

“The Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Trade Commission are committed to protecting the online privacy of American consumers. We believe that the best way to do that is through a comprehensive and consistent framework. After all, Americans care about the overall privacy of their information when they use the Internet, and they shouldn't have to be lawyers or engineers to figure out if their information is protected differently depending on which part of the Internet holds it.

“That's why we disagreed with the FCC's unilateral decision in 2015 to strip the FTC of its authority over broadband providers' privacy and data security practices, removing an effective cop from the beat. The FTC has a long track record of protecting consumers' privacy and security throughout the Internet ecosystem. It did not serve consumers' interests to abandon this longstanding, bipartisan, successful approach.

“We still believe that jurisdiction over broadband providers' privacy and data security practices should be returned to the FTC, the nation's expert agency with respect to these important subjects. All actors in the online space should be subject to the same rules, enforced by the same agency.

“Until that happens, however, we will work together on harmonizing the FCC's privacy rules for broadband providers with the FTC's standards for other companies in the digital economy. Accordingly, the FCC today stayed one of its rules before it could take effect on March 2. This rule is not consistent with the FTC's privacy framework. The stay will remain in place only until the FCC is able to rule on a petition for reconsideration of its privacy rules.

“Two years after the FCC stripped broadband consumers of FTC privacy protections, some now express concern that the temporary delay of a rule not yet in effect will leave consumers unprotected. We agree that it is vital to fill the consumer protection gap created by the FCC in 2015, and today's action is a step toward properly filling that gap. How that gap is filled matters. It does not serve consumers' interests to create two distinct frameworks—one for Internet service providers and one for all other online companies.

“The federal government shouldn’t favor one set of companies over another—and certainly not when it comes to a marketplace as dynamic as the Internet. So going forward, we will work together to establish a technology-neutral privacy framework for the online world. Such a uniform approach is in the best interests of consumers and has a long track record of success.”

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).