

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Expanding the Economic and Innovation Opportunities of Spectrum Through Incentive Auctions*, GN Docket No. 12-268; *Amendment of Parts 73 and 74 of the Commission's Rules to Establish Rules for Digital Low Power Television and Television Translator Stations*, MB Docket No. 03-185; *Channel Sharing by Full Power and Class A Stations Outside the Broadcast Television Spectrum Incentive Auction Context*, MB Docket No. 15-137.

In the 1980s, the Care Bears taught a generation of young television viewers that “sharing is caring.” And now, sharing is about to play an important role in broadcast television itself. Channel sharing may be a difficult concept to appreciate for non-engineers, but it’s an important one. It promotes the efficient use of spectrum by allowing two or more broadcast television stations to share a single 6 MHz channel. And it will help to facilitate the continued availability of TV stations following the FCC’s incentive auction, thus ensuring that the public will continue to benefit from free, over-the-air broadcast programming.

The Commission realized this when it previously established rules permitting primary stations (full power and Class A TV stations) that chose to relinquish spectrum in the incentive auction to share a channel with another station. But these regulations limited sharing to the auction context; what happened after the auction’s end, and after auction-related channel-sharing agreements expired, was an open question.

Today, we answer that question by allowing broadcast TV stations to channel-share outside of the incentive auction context. Specifically, we will permit primary stations to enter into new sharing agreements, either with the same sharing partner or a new one, once their auction-related agreements terminate or otherwise expire. This will help prevent loss of broadcast service to the public by ensuring that stations with auction-related channel sharing agreements can continue broadcasting once their agreements end. We will also permit Class A stations that were not parties to auction-related sharing agreements to channel-share outside of the auction context.

Today’s *Order* will also further benefit secondary stations that may be displaced by the post-auction repacking—that is, low-power television and television translator stations—by increasing those stations’ opportunities for channel sharing. The FCC previously authorized channel sharing between secondary stations to help mitigate the auction’s potential to displace these stations; this *Order* goes one step further and permits all secondary stations to share a channel outside the auction context not only with another secondary station but with a primary station as well. This expanded flexibility will help ensure that secondary stations displaced by the repack can continue to operate after the auction concludes. Moreover, increased channel options could potentially reduce construction and operating costs for resource-constrained secondary stations, including small, minority-owned, and niche stations.

We are in debt to the dedicated Commission staff who worked so diligently on this complex *Order*. From the Media Bureau, I’d like to thank Michelle Carey, Hillary DeNigro, Martha Heller, Shaun Maher, and Kim Matthews. From the Office of General Counsel, thank you to David Konczal and Bill Scher. And last but certainly not least, from the Incentive Auction Task Force, thank you to Jean Kiddoo. Pardon the bad pun, but the credit deserves to be shared among all of you.