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For Immediate Release**FCC CHAIRMAN VISITS TEXAS AND GETS FIRSTHAND
VIEWS OF HURRICANE HARVEY DAMAGE**

WASHINGTON, September 6, 2017—Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai visited Houston and Austin this week to survey the damage caused by Hurricane Harvey and meet with local, state, and federal officials engaged in recovery efforts. The Chairman was particularly focused on the performance of communication networks during and after the storm, and how the FCC can better enable Americans to communicate and learn critical information in an emergency.

The Chairman started off the trip with an aerial tour of Harris County and the surrounding area, where entire neighborhoods were still heavily flooded, as well as areas where immediate recovery was underway with huge amounts of debris and personal effects piled up outside homes.

Next, he visited the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network, which is the largest 9-1-1 system in Texas, covering Harris and Fort Bend Counties. Chairman Pai toured the facility and met with local officials to learn more about their response efforts during and after Hurricane Harvey. Many dispatchers who had been relocated to the facility from another public safety answering point worked continuously throughout the storm and several slept in the call center as their own homes were flooded.

“It was sobering to be on the ground in Houston to survey the damage that Harvey left behind, to meet with the courageous and dedicated state and local officials amidst ongoing recovery efforts, and to witness the generous spirit and resilience of Texas,” said Chairman Pai. “Nowhere was this more apparent than at the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Center, where so many calls for help were answered. Officials told me they received more than 3,100 calls per hour at the peak of Harvey—that’s 10 times the normal volume for 911 calls. Dispatchers worked around the clock, and some stayed overnight in the facility, to serve their community and help those in need.”

The Chairman then visited KPRC-TV—one of the many television and radio broadcast stations that provided emergency information to millions of Houston residents.

“There was huge and critically important demand for timely information, and KPRC and other area broadcasters stepped up to provide non-stop, wall-to-wall, life-saving emergency information and news,” he said.

The Chairman also visited the George R. Brown Convention Center and met with representatives of Smart City Networks and Crown Castle, which shared how the two companies worked to

supply online connectivity for thousands of Harvey victims who took shelter at the Convention Center.

Pai continued, “It was deeply emotional to see hundreds of families, including many young children, taking shelter at the George R. Brown Convention Center. Next to their cots, many had all the possessions they had left.

“Access to high-speed Internet was critical for people at the Center to stay connected with their families and get information about the storm. And thankfully, with the dense deployment of wireless infrastructure like distributed antenna systems and innovative uses of Wi-Fi spectrum, people were able to get that access, as well as power needed to keep devices charged.”

On Wednesday morning, Chairman Pai visited the State Operations Center in Austin, which is managed and staffed by the Texas Department of Emergency Management. He met with Todd Early, Deputy Assistant Director at the Texas Department of Public Safety, Greg Boren, Regional Emergency Communication Coordinator at FEMA, and other members of senior public safety management.

“We had a productive meeting at the State Operations Center,” Pai concluded. “DPS and FEMA officials told us that the FCC’s Disaster Information Reporting System was critical during Harvey. It was heartening to see so many different agencies and experts doing everything they could to assist in the rescue, recovery, and ongoing rebuilding of the disaster area.”

Throughout the storm, the FCC, among other things, released daily public communications status reports, which provided a real-time snapshot of network outage data submitted by communications providers to the FCC’s Disaster Information Reporting System. The FCC provided a clearing house of agency information at www.fcc.gov/harvey, and has already begun efforts related to Hurricane Irma. More information can be found at www.fcc.gov/irma.

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