

**STATEMENT OF  
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Authorizing Permissive Use of the “Next Generation” Broadcast Television Standard*, GN Docket No. 16-142.

Today is a promising day for consumers, an exciting day for technological innovation, and a historic day for the broadcast business. By authorizing the rollout of the next generation broadcast television standard (Next Gen TV) on a voluntary, market-driven basis, we open the door to a substantially improved, free, over-the-air television broadcast service, and fiercer competition in the video marketplace.

As the world’s first IP-based broadcast transmission platform, Next Gen TV has the potential to bring a wide range of benefits to American consumers. It will enable broadcasters to provide Ultra High Definition video and immersive audio. It will allow them to offer innovative services, including TV on smartphones and enhanced accessibility features for Americans with hearing or visual impairments. And perhaps most importantly, it will enhance our public safety capabilities. For instance, Next Gen TV will enable advanced emergency alerting that could wake up sleeping devices to warn consumers of imminent emergencies. It will also allow for localized, emergency alerts in a variety of languages, and enhanced datacasting to serve law enforcement and first responders more efficiently.

In particular, Next Gen TV could be a boon to public television broadcasters and viewers. Public broadcasters are strong supporters of Next Gen TV. They’re eager to employ it to deliver interactive educational children’s content, including the distribution of over-the-air learning materials that viewers without broadband otherwise can’t access. Public television stations have also told us that Next Gen TV could enable them to provide innovative distance learning; imagine teachers and students having customized course materials, lectures, class discussions, and virtual field trips.

Another important point: this is going to be a voluntary, market-driven transition. Following this *Order*, no broadcaster will be required to use the Next Gen TV standard. No consumer will be required to buy a new television or dongle for his or her current television that will allow them to receive Next Gen TV programming. The choice will be up to them. Broadcasters deploying the Next Gen TV standard will be required to simulcast programming using the current digital television (DTV) standard—in other words, their current viewers, with their current TVs, will be unaffected. This is precisely the kind of technological innovation the FCC should champion.

But of course, not everyone does. When confronted with change, there are always those who stubbornly cling to the past, who choose fear and opportunism over freedom and opportunity. And we’ve seen that in spades in this proceeding. These naysayers have asked us to impose extensive government regulation in order to strangle Next Gen TV in its infancy. They call for delays that they’d never conceive or countenance were the innovation pioneered by, say, Silicon Valley instead of the TV industry. They stoke false fears about having to buy new equipment to see your favorite show. They seek a categorical viewer-impact standard they themselves have rejected in this agency’s pending vacant channel proceeding.

In sum, they follow in the tired tradition of those who have sought to unleash the regulatory process to block progress. This opposition echoes what took place at the dawn of the automobile age. Many back then demanded a requirement that a car be preceded by a person carrying a red flag to warn people that the car was coming. Even worse, one state legislature actually passed a mandate that motorists stop, disassemble their vehicle, and conceal the parts in bushes if the car frightened a passing horse. Would these rules have kept pedestrians and equine safer? Perhaps marginally so. But they ultimately would’ve extracted such a staggering social cost that the very impulse now rightly strikes reasonable people as completely absurd. So I’m glad we’re rejecting this attempt to block technological progress.

It's also worth noting that Next Gen TV could boost competition in the video marketplace. Through expanded service offerings and new features, Next Gen TV should enhance the free, over-the-air television service that many Americans rely on, and make it a stronger competitor to pay-TV services. That would be good for all Americans, and particularly for low-income television viewers.

In sum, what is a vote to approve this item? Among other things, it's a vote for innovation. It's a vote for competition. It's a vote for better picture quality and sound quality. It's a vote for public safety. It's a vote for better educational content for children. It's a vote for enhanced accessibility features. It's a vote for public television. And for all of these reasons, it's a vote that I am proud to cast.

Thank you to the dedicated staff who worked on this item: Evan Baranoff, Kathy Berthot, Steven Broeckaert, Michelle Carey, John Gabrysch, Martha Heller, Tom Horan, Kim Matthews, Mary Beth Murphy, and Brendan Murray from the Media Bureau; Mark Colombo, Martin Doczkat, Matthew Hussey, Walter Johnston, Julie Knapp, Paul Murray, and Barbara Pavon from the Office of Engineering and Technology; and Susan Aaron and Dave Konczal from the Office of General Counsel.