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For Immediate Release

CHAIRMAN PAI UNVEILS \$954 MILLION PLAN TO RESTORE AND EXPAND NETWORKS IN PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund (Bringing Puerto Rico Together Fund) and Connect USVI Fund Would Improve Connectivity for Residents

WASHINGTON, March 6, 2018—Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai today proposed to direct approximately \$954 million toward restoring and expanding communications networks in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands—networks that were damaged and destroyed during the 2017 hurricane season.

Specifically, he proposed to create a \$750 million Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund (Bringing Puerto Rico Together Fund) and a \$204 million Connect USVI Fund. Each of these funds would provide additional short-term assistance for restoring communications networks in the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria and longer-term support for expanding broadband access throughout the islands.

“The people of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are still recovering from last year’s devastating storms. That means the FCC’s work is far from over,” said Chairman Pai. “After my previous visit to Puerto Rico, I publicly committed to ‘thinking creatively and doing proactively to help restore networks on the island.’ The plan I’ve proposed today would deliver on that commitment and extend that vision even further. The plan calls for the FCC to devote almost \$1 billion in funding both to the short-term, efficient restoration of service *and* the long-term improvement and expansion of broadband throughout Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. With the 2018 hurricane season less than three months away, we need to take bold and decisive action. I hope that my fellow commissioners will join me in supporting the creation of the Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund and Connect USVI Fund.”

The plan includes:

- An immediate infusion of approximately \$64 million in additional funding for short-term restoration efforts.
- A proposal to allocate approximately \$631 million in long-term funding for the restoration and expansion of fixed broadband connectivity in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- A proposal to allocate approximately \$259 million in medium-term funding for the restoration and expansion of 4G LTE mobile broadband connectivity in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- The immediate conversion of the advanced funding the Commission provided last year to carriers in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands into new funding by declining to offset that advanced funding against future universal service support payments.

The plan would be funded by providing approximately \$256 million in new funds as well as repurposing universal service support currently directed to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Chairman Pai will [travel](#) to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands from March 7-10. He will lead a team to review recovery efforts, evaluate lessons learned from Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and prepare for the upcoming hurricane season.

The Commission has taken numerous actions to promote public safety and connectivity in the aftermath of last year's hurricanes. In addition to providing public information on network outage conditions and sending staff to monitor and aid recovery efforts, the Commission offered the territories nearly [\\$77 million](#) in advanced universal service funding to help recovery, accelerated the [post-incentive auction transition](#) to support Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands broadcasters, [granted](#) temporary waivers of Lifeline's recertification rules, expedited approval of experimental licenses for Alphabet's [Project Loon](#) to provide Internet access to residents, approved targeted and flexible [E-Rate support](#) to help restore connectivity of schools and libraries, and granted more than 200 waivers and requests for Special Temporary Authority (STA) to help re-establish communications in hurricane-affected areas.

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