

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

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

Imagine a world in which TV broadcasts of your favorite show or news program were delivered in ultra-high definition and with immersive audio. Imagine a world in which programming content was hyper-localized, and broadcasters could deliver niche content to specific geographic areas within a station’s signal area. Imagine a world that offered Americans with disabilities far better accessibility options for experiencing broadcast television. Imagine a world in which every consumer’s smartphone could serve as an over-the-air programming device, allowing viewership on the go. And imagine a world in which our emergency alert system was far more advanced, tailoring alerts to particular neighborhoods and waking up sleeping devices to warn consumers of imminent emergencies.

This world need not be imaginary with the advent of “Next Generation” television broadcasting. The technical standard that would deliver these benefits is known as ATSC 3.0. Many American broadcasters are itching to develop and implement it in order to better serve American consumers. But they need our permission to do that.

Today, we take the first step towards bringing the next generation of television broadcasting to the United States. Specifically, in today’s *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (Notice)*, we propose to allow television broadcasters to use ATSC 3.0 on a voluntary, market-driven basis. In doing so, we aim to enable broadcast innovation and promote American leadership in the global broadcasting industry.

Why does this matter? Well, TV broadcasting remains an indispensable part of our nation’s communications landscape. Indeed, most of television’s biggest events and highest-rated shows are still on broadcast TV. Just over two-and-a-half weeks ago, over 111 million people—and 70% of U.S. households using TV¹—tuned in to watch the Super Bowl over-the-air on FOX. And most importantly, when wireless networks go dark, or Internet access is disrupted, people still turn to their local broadcasters for life-saving information.

But in the digital age, television broadcasting is capable of doing even more. Indeed, the ATSC 3.0 standard appears to have enormous potential. It’s the first transmission standard to marry the advantages of broadcasting and the Internet. And it’s based on Internet Protocol, or IP, which will permit seamless integration with other IP-based services and platforms. ATSC 3.0 also has the ability to deliver many new features, like the ones I mentioned.

Importantly, we are also asking the public to help us assess the impact of broadcasters’ voluntary deployment of the Next Generation transmission standard on consumers, cable and direct broadcast satellite companies, and broadcasters themselves. For instance, it’s important for the FCC to facilitate innovation, but we also should minimize any disruption to consumers that could result from this voluntary implementation of the new standard. That’s why, among other things, we propose to require that broadcasters that choose to transmit their signal in ATSC 3.0 format from their current facilities arrange for another station in their market to “simulcast” their programming using the current standard, ATSC 1.0. That way, over-the-air viewers who don’t have ATSC 3.0 equipment won’t be left in the dark.

We are in debt to the dedicated Commission staff who worked so diligently on this *Notice*. From the Media Bureau, I’d like to thank Evan Baranoff, Kathy Berthot, Steven Broeckert, Michelle Carey,

¹ Nielsen, *Super Bowl LI Draws 111.3 Million TV Viewers*, <http://bit.ly/2ljIUMK> (Feb. 6, 2017).

John Gabrysch, Martha Heller, Kim Matthews, and Brendan Murray. And from the Office of Engineering and Technology, thanks to Martin Doczkat, Matt Hussey, Julie Knapp, Paul Murray, and Barbara Pavon. Your joint efforts in getting us to this point are much appreciated.

Working together, I hope we can issue a final authorization of this new standard by the end of the year so that American broadcasters can deliver to our nation's citizens even more of the marvels of the digital age.