

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Revitalization of the AM Radio Service*, MB Docket No. 13-249.

Last year, over 1,000 AM radio stations acquired FM translators as a result of the Commission's AM Radio Revitalization Initiative. The stations benefiting from our initiative represent the diversity and localism found on the AM band. For example, FM translators went to a Shawnee, Oklahoma station owned by the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, as well as the student-run station at the University of Colorado in Boulder. And then there's WBTC-AM in Uhrichsville, Ohio, which switched on its FM translator last Fourth of July in time for its owner's 98th birthday. Among other things, the station, which has been owned by local resident James Natoli since 1963, broadcasts local news, sports, a program called *Dial & Deal*, where listeners can buy and sell items, and *Dial & Speak*, the only call-in show in all of Tuscarawas County.

Our efforts thus far to make it easier for AM broadcasters to obtain FM translators have been a tremendous success. But we've also heard that the Commission's rule setting forth where an FM fill-in translator rebroadcasting an AM broadcast station may be sited is too restrictive and has blocked some AM broadcasters from being able to purchase a translator. That's why in 2014 the Commission sought comment on a proposal to relax the rule.¹ And that's why today we are moving ahead and changing it.

The specifics of the rule change involve technical jargon that only broadcast engineers will probably understand. But the real-world impact of this *Order* is simple: It will now be easier for AM stations to find a suitable location for their FM translators. And that, in turn, will make it easier for AM broadcasters to serve their local communities, particularly at night.

I'd like to thank the dedicated staff of the Media Bureau's Audio Division, including Jim Bradshaw, Peter Doyle, Tom Nessinger, and Lisa Scanlan, for their work on this *Order*. I've said many times before that when it comes to promoting localism, advancing diversity, and otherwise serving the public interest, AM radio matters. It's a vital part of the nation's communications infrastructure, and I hope it thrives for years to come.

¹ *Revitalization of the AM Radio Service*, First Report and Order, Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making, and Notice of Inquiry, 30 FCC Rcd 12145 (2015).