

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Rural Call Completion*, WC Docket No. 13-39.

For too many rural Americans, a pessimistic truth underlies Carly Rae Jepsen's catchy stanza, "Hey I just met you. And this is crazy. But here's my number. So call me maybe." That's because there have been difficulties completing long-distance telephone calls to rural America. "Maybe" a long-distance call made to a distant town will connect; maybe it won't.

But "maybe" doesn't cut it when it comes to connecting Americans. That's why the FCC is paying close attention to rural call completion. Although complaints on this issue decreased by more than half in 2016, there are still far too many callers experiencing delayed and dropped calls, as well as false ring tones and false busy signals, when calling a rural family member or business. A few weeks ago, I heard about this problem firsthand, and repeatedly, in places like Laurens, Iowa (population 1,258).

With this *Second Further Notice*, we propose rules to require providers under our jurisdiction to actively monitor and promptly address rural call completion problems. We believe that these new rules will be more effective in directly and swiftly addressing call completion issues than our existing regulations.

We'll stay focused on this issue until we can remove the qualifier "maybe" from rural Americans' telecom lexicon. However appealing Carly's crush might have been, even more important are the calls made from a daughter in New York to her Dad in rural Ohio to wish him a happy birthday, or the calls from customers to a Southern e-commerce startup.

Thank you to the FCC's excellent staff for the continued work on this issue. From the Wireline Competition Bureau: David Brody, Jean Ann Collins, Adam Copeland, Alex Espinoza, Daniel Kahn, Kris Monteith, Nirali Patel, Steve Rosenberg, and Dana Zelman. From the Enforcement Bureau: Margaret Dailey and Kalun Lee. And from the Office of General Counsel: Bill Dever, Rick Mallen, and Bill Richardson.