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**For Immediate Release**

**CHAIRMAN PAI PROPOSES OVER \$500 MILLION IN FUNDING TO PROMOTE RURAL BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT**

WASHINGTON, January 16, 2018—Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai today shared with his fellow commissioners an order to promote more high-speed broadband deployment in rural areas. If adopted, it would provide over \$500 million in additional funding for cooperatives and small rural carriers. The order would also put in place strong new rules to prevent abuse of the high-cost program. Finally, the order proposes several reforms to the FCC’s high-cost program to improve its effectiveness and efficiency in promoting rural broadband deployment, including the use of a Tribal Broadband Factor to enable better access on Tribal lands. Chairman Pai offered the following statement:

“Closing the digital divide is the FCC’s top priority. A key way to reach this goal in rural America is updating the FCC’s high-cost universal service program to encourage cooperatives and other small, rural carriers to build more online infrastructure. We need more deployment in sparsely populated rural areas if we’re going to extend digital opportunity to all Americans. But I’ve heard from community leaders, Congress, and carriers that insufficient, unpredictable funding has kept them from reaching this goal. With the \$500 million in new funding provided by this order, we’ll boost broadband deployment in rural America and put our high-cost system on a more efficient path, helping to ensure that every American can benefit from the digital revolution.”

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*This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).*