

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Petition of USTelecom for Forbearance Pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 160(c) to Accelerate Investment in Broadband and Next-Generation Networks*, WC Docket No. 18-141; *2000 Biennial Review Separate Affiliate Requirements of Section 64.1903 of the Commission's Rules*, CC Docket No. 00-175.

This *Order* takes us back to 1996. That year, Congress passed the Telecommunications Act, granting authority to the FCC to forbear from enforcing obsolete statutory requirements or regulations. That same year, Hootie and the Blowfish topped the charts, lamenting “Time . . . you ain’t no friend of mine.”¹

These markers converge with respect to this petition for forbearance, which asks the FCC to consider whether particular regulations established over two decades ago are necessary given epochal marketplace changes in the years since. Back then, the “Baby Bell” companies and other incumbent carriers had monopolies in the local telephone market and were looking to enter the long-distance market. Today, the marketplace has shifted dramatically, so much so that most people as old as these rules probably haven’t heard of the phrase “Baby Bell” and don’t think of “long-distance” as a distinct service.

In keeping with our statutory obligation, we therefore grant relief from these outdated requirements. For example, we forbear from enforcing the burdensome rule that smaller, rural carriers (unlike their larger, urban brethren) must offer long-distance telephone service through a separate affiliated company. And we relieve incumbent carriers from the obligation to submit unnecessary reports about their legacy “special access” services.

By modernizing our rules, we will enable carriers to focus scarce resources on delivering the networks and services of the future to American consumers, rather than on complying with needless regulations from the past.

For their time and diligent work on this item, I’d like to thank Pamela Arluk, Michele Berlove, Allison Baker, Megan Capasso, Justin Faulb, Ed Krachmer, Kris Monteith, Terri Natoli, and Claudia Pabo of the Wireline Competition Bureau; Pam Megna and Eric Ralph of the Office of Economics and Analytics; and Malena Barzilai and Rick Mallen of the Office of General Counsel.

¹ HOOTIE & THE BLOWFISH, *Time*, on CRACKED REAR VIEW (Atlantic Records 1994); see also Billboard, Hootie & The Blowfish Chart History, Adult Top 40 (1996), <https://www.billboard.com/music/hootie-the-blowfish/chart-history/adult-pop-songs/song/38001>.