

FCC Chairman Pai Announces Creation of a Broadband Deployment Advisory Council

February 1, 2017



Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) Chairman Ajit Pai marked his first open meeting as Chairman by [announcing](#) a new Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee (Committee), which is intended to advise the FCC on accelerating the deployment of high-speed internet access in communities across the country. Designed to make recommendations to reduce and remove regulatory barriers to infrastructure investment, the Committee will develop specific reforms to the FCC's pole attachment rules, identifying unreasonable regulatory barriers to broadband deployment, ways to encourage local governments to adopt deployment-friendly policies, and other reforms within the Commission's authority, including provisions under the Middle Class Tax Cut and Job Relief Act of 2012.

Chairman Pai has [said](#) that "one of the first things" the Committee will tackle is drafting a "model code for broadband deployment," covering local franchising, zoning, permitting and rights-of-way regulations, for Commission consideration. An FCC-approved model code could help communities design more conducive regulatory environments for broadband deployment, helping improve the business case for providers to build-out in networks in areas without the resources or expertise in next-generation networks.

The creation of this Committee comes shortly after the release of the [Broadband Opportunity Council Progress Report](#), which documents an inter-agency council's (Council) progress of completing nearly half of 36 executive actions by 25 Cabinet-level and federal agencies to increase broadband deployment, competition and adoption. Many of the actions include expanded program eligibility for broadband under various Department of Agriculture, Department of Justice, Department of Treasury, Department of Health and Human Services, National Science Foundation and Economic Development Administration funding programs. While the Council continues its efforts at the Cabinet-level, this new Committee will now have the authority to reform current FCC rules and regulations that can impede infrastructure investment. Coordination will be needed amongst the two groups to bridge the digital divide and promote investment in broadband deployment.

According to a Commission [Public Notice](#), the Commission is now accepting nominations for

membership on the Committee, which will operate according the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). Under FACA, meetings shall be open to the public with timely notice of the meetings published in the Federal Register. The Commission seeks nominations from representatives of the communications industry, state and local regulators, and consumer and community organizations that wish to be considered for membership. Specifically, the Commission seeks nominations and expressions of interest from:

- Rural Internet service providers that use licensed or unlicensed spectrum, fiber optics, copper wires, or coaxial cables, or any other means to offer high-speed broadband service;
- Urban Internet service providers that use licensed or unlicensed spectrum, fiber optics, copper wires, or coaxial cables, or any other means to offer high-speed broadband service;
- Independent network builders and networking equipment installers;
- Other entities involved in deploying broadband;
- Industry trade associations;
- Federal, state, local, and Tribal government agencies;
- Consumer and community organizations; and
- Qualified representatives of other stakeholders and interested parties with relevant experience.

Federal lobbyists will not be considered. Members will serve at the Chairman's discretion and commit to a two-year term of service. Members will attend three one day meetings per year and participate in a minimum of one subcommittee. Applications should be submitted by email to bdac@fcc.gov no later than February 15, 2017. The Committee will hold its first meet this spring.