

Media Contact:

Neil Grace, (202) 418-0506
neil.grace@fcc.gov

For Immediate Release

**FCC LAUNCHES REVIEW OF SATELLITE ORBITAL DEBRIS
MITIGATION RULES IN NEW SPACE AGE**

WASHINGTON, November 15, 2018—The Federal Communications Commission today initiated a comprehensive review of its orbital debris mitigation rules. Orbital debris, also known as space debris, consists of a variety of objects, including non-functional satellites, that are orbiting the Earth. Debris can pose a risk to operations in Earth orbit, including satellites and manned spacecraft, and in some instances, pieces of debris falling back to Earth can pose a risk to persons and property on the surface of the Earth. With this Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, the Commission is seeking to keep pace with technological and market changes, and to incorporate improvements in debris mitigation practices into the Commission's rules. Today's action will help to preserve the space environment for continued innovation.

The Commission's current orbital debris rules were first adopted in 2004. Since then, there have been significant changes in satellite technologies and market conditions, particularly in Low Earth Orbit, i.e., below 2000 kilometers altitude. These changes include the increasing use of lower-cost small satellites and proposals to deploy large constellations of non-geostationary satellite orbit (NGSO) systems, some involving thousands of satellites.

The NPRM proposes changes to improve disclosure of debris mitigation plans. The NPRM also makes proposals and seeks comment related to satellite disposal reliability and methodology, appropriate deployment altitudes in low-Earth-orbit, and on-orbit lifetime, with a particular focus on large NGSO satellite constellations. Other aspects of the NPRM include new rule proposals for geostationary orbit satellite (GSO) license term extension requests, and consideration of disclosure requirements related to several emerging technologies and new types of commercial operations, including rendezvous and proximity operations.

Action by the Commission November 15, 2018 by Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 18-159). Chairman Pai, Commissioners O'Rielly, and Carr approving. Commissioner Rosenworcel concurring. Chairman Pai, Commissioners O'Rielly, Carr, and Rosenworcel issuing separate statements.

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Office of Media Relations: (202) 418-0500
ASL Videophone: (844) 432-2275
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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).