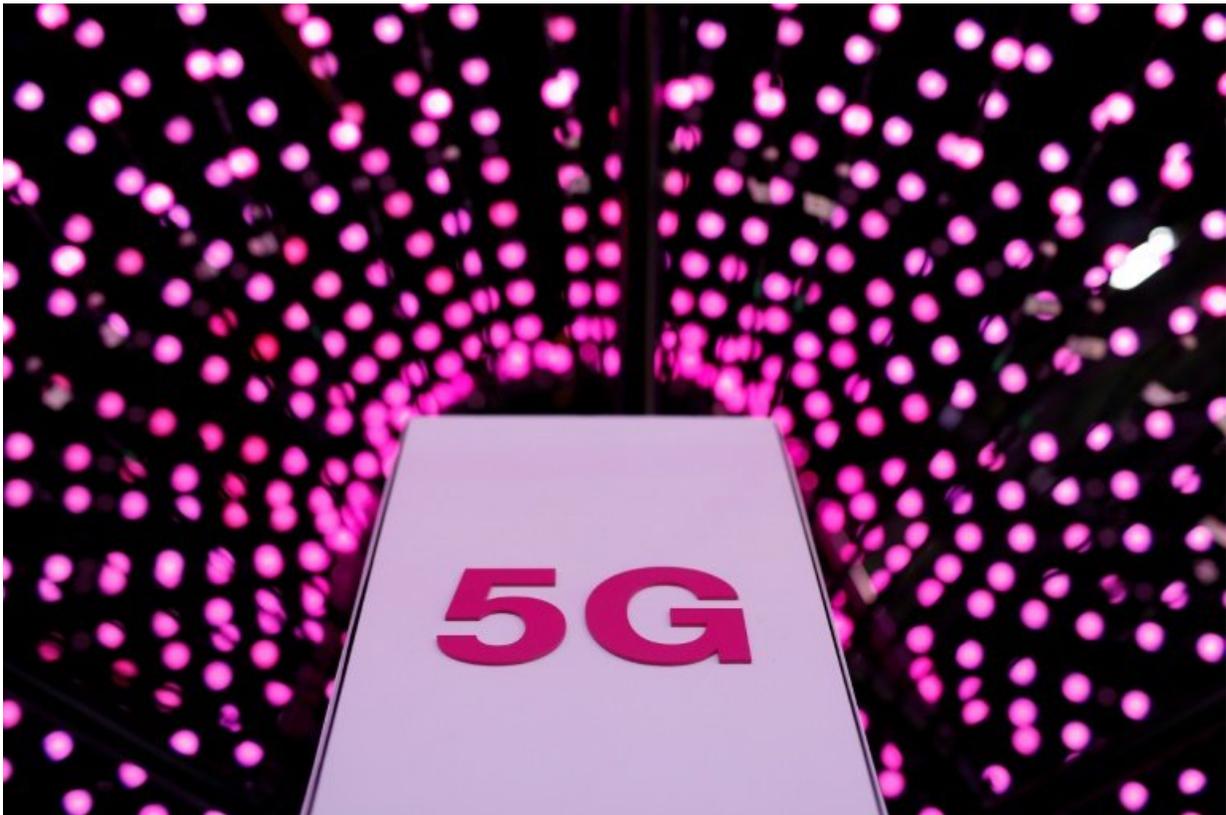


US defends moves to roll back 'net neutrality' rules

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A 5G antenna at the Deutsche Telekom stand at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona

The head of the US Federal Communications Commission defended Monday his move to roll back rules requiring internet providers to treat

all traffic equally, saying it was needed to encourage investment in new super-fast wireless networks.

The commission in December adopted the proposal by Republican appointed chairman Ajit Pai to end the so-called "[net neutrality](#)" rules adopted in 2015.

Activists have staged protests around the US and online, saying dominant broadband providers could favour their own services and hinder those of rivals and charge more for certain kinds of access.

Critics of the "net neutrality" rule however argue it was based on utility-style regulation designed for 1930s telephone companies.

Pai said the move was needed to give the private sector "greater incentives to invest" in the new generation of super-fast 5G wireless networks and ensure the United States keeps its technological edge over other nations.

"To lead the world in 5G, the United States needs modern light touch market based regulation not a one size fits all utility model that was developed in the 1930s," he told the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona.

The first deployment of 5G wireless networks, which are quick enough to download a full length film in less than a second, are expected in key markets like the United States, Japan and South Korea at the end of the year.



Pai said market based regulation was needed in the US to encourage investment in 5G wireless networks

5G is seen as key to develop newer "next generation" services such as telemedicine or autonomous driving.

Several lawsuits are expected to try to block the change.

Last month technology companies including Alphabet Inc and Facebook Inc threw their weight behind efforts to reverse the Trump administration's plan to repeal the Obama-era rule designed to protect an

open internet.

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