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Federal Communications Commission
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Opening Remarks of FCC Chairman Michael Powell FCC Agenda Meeting, September 13, 2001

Despite its range and versatility, the human language fails me in these weary days; there are no words to capture the depth of our collective sadness, of our outrage at the heinous events that befell our nation this week. Sadly, there will only be a few degrees of separation between all of us. Some of our extended FCC family has died, and we have employees who are grieving for loved ones that perished. For them we all pray.

These are dark days. Yet, I take comfort in the knowledge that the shadows that now darken our lives will be chased away by our indomitable spirit and the steel of our resolve. We are Americans after all.

Our reaction must be to defy these dastardly acts and not cower or be deterred from our duties: to our families, to our friends, and to our countrymen. The flame of the American ideal may flicker, but it will never be extinguished. So we are here today. We will do our small part and press on with our business — solemnly, but resolutely.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend our deepest gratitude to the many communications entities both in New York and here in Washington, D.C. for their heroic efforts in ensuring that the world's premier communications network has continued to be available in this time of tragedy. In particular, the efforts of Verizon have been nothing short of outstanding, as have been the disaster relief efforts of AT&T and the countless other communications entities. I cannot express enough our pride in these efforts at a time when many of our regulatees have lost members of their internal families.

I would also like to commend the work of our news agencies and those that engage in bringing news to Americans. Cable companies have worked hand in hand with broadcasters to ensure that the citizens of New York are receiving the news that they need to know.

Finally, let me assure everyone that we are in constant contact with these companies as they work tirelessly to keep our wireline and wireless telephone networks and television service operating efficiently and effectively. Their efforts are just one of many examples of the triumphs of Americans in the face of tragedy. I am confident that these efforts will continue to ensure the nation's communications infrastructure will operate effectively to serve the communications needs of our citizens and an efficient functioning economy.