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STATEMENT OF FCC CHAIRMAN POWELL FOLLOWING TOUR OF NEW YORK TELEPHONE FACILITIES AND DISCUSSION OF REPAIR EFFORTS WITH TELEPHONE OFFICIALS

Yesterday, I went to New York to see first hand the devastation of telephone facilities and infrastructure that resulted from the attack on the World Trade Center in New York and to personally thank telephone workers for their non-stop efforts to restore telephone service to Manhattan.

While I cannot adequately describe the total devastation and destruction that I witnessed at the site of the attack, I can report how deeply impressed and proud I was by both the intensity of the repair efforts and the commitment that the industry is bringing to this task.

These companies know how important telecommunications is in our society today, and how essential it is to consumers and businesses alike to have their damaged or destroyed lines operational as soon as possible.

I want to particularly commend Verizon -- whose facilities were particularly impacted by the disaster -- for the hard work, dedication and Herculean efforts undertaken to substantially repair equipment and reroute traffic where cables have been destroyed to get their service back on line. All those involved in the arduous and trying task of maintaining the system deserve our praise and gratitude for their dedication.

Verizon and other communications companies impacted have my full support to assist them in any way possible as they continue to face the enormous challenges ahead of us in this difficult time.

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