

WRITTEN STATEMENT

Of

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Hearing

on

Wireless E911

Before the

**Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives**

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**SUMMARY OF WRITTEN STATEMENT OF
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Recent years have seen a heightened sensitivity surrounding crisis management and an emphasis on improving emergency response systems. Appropriately, much attention has been directed to 911 calls, and more specifically, wireless 911 calls. Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) now report that they receive 30 to 50 percent of emergency calls from wireless phones. Ensuring that each American using a wireless phone has enhanced 911 capabilities – *i.e.*, technology to automatically identify their location to emergency call takers – has been an important goal of the FCC's for at least the past seven years.

The Commission's initial E911 decision established two phases of E911 deployment. Phase I requires carriers to provide the telephone number of the 911 caller and the location of the cell site or base station receiving the 911 call. Phase II service requires wireless carriers to provide more precise location information for wireless E911, within certain accuracy parameters. Of the Phase I requests received from PSAPs, the six nationwide carriers have, on average, fulfilled approximately 75 percent of these requests. Phase II implementation requires wireless carriers to select either a handset-based or network-based solution. However, the actual rollout of Phase II service, like that of Phase I, depends in large part on when the PSAP makes a request to the wireless carrier for Phase II service. According to reports submitted to the FCC by the nationwide wireless carriers, the six nationwide carriers have implemented Phase II E911 in approximately 400 markets covering approximately 800 unique PSAPs.

Although significant progress is being made, we still have a long way to go before wireless E911 is deployed across the Nation. To further promote the successful implementation and deployment of nationwide E911, the FCC has engaged in four major areas of activity: (1) enforcement, (2) implementation, (3) investigation of technical and operational challenges, and (4) outreach and coordination.

The Commission has been active on each of these fronts, as is more fully detailed in the full testimony. It must be noted, however, that there continue to be E911 implementation issues beyond the Commission's purview. Specifically, we note that PSAP funding continues to be a significant barrier to deployment.

Regarding enforcement, over the last year, the FCC has collected millions of dollars from major wireless carriers stemming from Consent Decrees or Notices of Apparent Liability and has met repeatedly with these carriers to emphasize the seriousness of the existing benchmarks.

Aside from enforcement, the FCC is examining multiple ways to speed and smooth E911 implementation. In various proceedings, the FCC has: (1) set a deployment schedule for non-nationwide, including many rural, carriers to begin to provide E911 service; (2) Clarified PSAP readiness issues and providing for a certification process for wireless carriers; (3) Provided guidance on cost recovery issues regarding the demarcation point between PSAPs and carriers;

(4) Sought comment on whether and how the 911 and E911 rules should apply to technologies not currently covered by the rules; (5) Clarified that its 911 call-forwarding rule does not preclude wireless carriers from blocking fraudulent 911 calls from non-service initialized phones under state and local laws; (6) Released a Staff Report on unintentional wireless 911 calls and outlining steps to address the problem; and (7) Sought comment on the report prepared by Mr. Dale Hatfield regarding technical and operational issues effecting E911.

The FCC has also actively sought cooperation from the incumbent local exchange carriers (ILECs) to fulfill their E911 implementation role. Late last summer, the FCC requested additional information from the six major ILECs regarding their role in E911 deployment, including specific information on technical issues and cost recovery plans. Moreover, Commission staff has been working with state commissions, wireless carriers, PSAPs, and ILECs regarding specific cost issues that have been brought to our attention.

Due to the complexities surrounding E911, coordination and outreach are increasingly essential to the FCC's efforts. To this end, the Commission kicked-off its E911 Coordination Initiative on April 29, 2003. This meeting brought together representatives from all interested stakeholders to share experiences and devise strategies for expediting E911. All of the Commissioners participated in the event, which addressed implementation issues such as PSAP funding, wireless carrier implementation and prioritization, issues relating to ILECs, and challenges faced by rural carriers. The next meeting of the E911 Coordination Initiative will take place in the fall.

In addition to the Coordination Initiative, various bureaus within the FCC have provided ongoing outreach to consumers, public safety, tribal governments and state legislators on E911 issues. For instance, the FCC has established points of contact designated by the Governors in all 50 states and three of the U.S. territories to work jointly to identify E911 funding and deployment solutions. The FCC expects to hold an E911 roundtable later this year with the Governors' designees as part of an ongoing dialogue to discuss E911. Additionally, the FCC intends to engage its Local and State Government Advisory Committee to develop a state-by-state funding and implementation survey. We also have been monitoring the E911 coordination efforts of other organizations to enhance stakeholder coordination and we applaud the joint efforts of industry and public safety.

All the stakeholders who have worked on this process – Congress, the public safety community, wireless carriers, ILECs, state and local governments, equipment vendors, technology vendors, and the Commission – should be proud of the progress made thus far. Tirelessly, these very same stakeholders must continue to be diligent. We appreciate Congress's efforts, and in particular, the efforts of members of this Subcommittee and the E911 Congressional Caucus, to keep this issue in the forefront. We plan to continue our efforts across all fronts, but especially the E911 Coordination Initiative, to ensure that E911 deployment continues apace.

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee. I appreciate this opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to discuss our work in support of the deployment of Enhanced 911 (E911) wireless services throughout the United States. This hearing is an important opportunity to encourage progress in this critical public safety matter, and I commend in particular Representatives Shimkus and Eshoo and the other members of the Congressional E911 Caucus for their leadership in this area.

I. Introduction

In recent years, we have seen a heightened sensitivity to the importance of crisis management and an emphasis on improving emergency response systems. The effectiveness of these systems is tied in part to the ability of the public to reach first responders in times of crisis. Whether calling from a regular wireline phone or a mobile phone, Americans today demand assurances from public officials that 911 calls will result in immediate assistance.

Most Americans have long taken it for granted that their 911 phone calls automatically identify their location to emergency call takers. We know all too well that this is not the case in today's world, especially with wireless phones. This mistaken belief of the infallibility of 911 reception and location pinpointing highlights the importance of the speedy deployment of technology to ensure automatic location identification.

Although few Americans even owned mobile phones prior to the last decade, Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) now report that they receive 30 to 50 percent of emergency calls from wireless phones. Some PSAPs reportedly receive upwards of 60 or 70 percent of their

911 calls from wireless phones. Unlike wireline phones, where the caller's location is identified through the address associated with the telephone number, mobile phones, present additional technological challenges with respect to automatic location identification.

Ensuring that each American using a wireless phone has enhanced 911 capabilities has been an important goal of the FCC's for at least the past seven years. The Commission developed wireless E911 rules to mandate the development and deployment of wireless 911 automatic location identification technology prior to commercial demand for that product. The FCC's initial decision in 1996 to impose an E911 requirement on mobile wireless carriers was not based on any statutory mandate, nor was it based on any tangible technological showing. Nonetheless the Commission believed such a requirement served the public interest.

Congress confirmed that assessment and added momentum to the Commission's activities with the passage of S. 800, the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999. This legislation mandated 911 as the universal number for emergency calls and aided E911 implementation by addressing key issues such as privacy and carrier liability. It also required the FCC to continue coordination efforts in this area, which we have done most recently through the E911 Coordination Initiative.

The Commission launched its E911 Coordination Initiative in response to the need for greater coordination among all stakeholders, including the FCC, wireless carriers, PSAPs, location technology vendors, incumbent local exchange carriers (ILECs), local and state governments, equipment manufacturers, and 911 service providers. The purpose of the

Coordination Initiative is to complement current efforts by those parties to speed and rationalize the E911 deployment process, and to ensure that all parties and the public have clear expectations about the roles of the respective parties and their deployment plans.

Implementation is an extremely complex process, and the Commission has taken firm steps to require that wireless carriers assume their responsibility in ensuring that the deployment of wireless E911 is not unnecessarily delayed.

It is important to note that not all aspects of E911 deployment are within the Commission's control. For example, financial support and assistance from state and local authorities to provide funding to the PSAPs for their part in this important initiative is also imperative. We know that members of Congress and particularly members of this Subcommittee share the Commission's goal that the entire Nation should have access to wireless E911 services as soon as practicable. We intend to work actively to facilitate E911 deployment as quickly and efficiently as possible.

II. Wireless E911 Deployment

The deployment of E911, because of technological and other challenges, was never intended to be a flash-cut process, but a gradual phase-in over several years. The Commission's initial E911 decision in 1996 was based in large part on a consensus agreement developed by the wireless carrier and public safety communities and established two phases of E911 deployment. Phase I requires carriers to deploy a service that provides the telephone number of the 911 caller and the location of the cell site or base station receiving the 911 call. Phase II service requires

wireless carriers to provide precise location information for wireless E911, within certain accuracy parameters.

Despite the challenges inherent in effectuating rollout for between 5,000 and 7,000 diverse PSAPs nationwide, wireless E911 is becoming a reality. Deployment of Phase I service is well under way. Of the Phase I requests received from PSAPs, the six nationwide carriers have, on average, fulfilled approximately 75 percent of these requests. Phase II has required special attention. Because of technological challenges associated with Phase II deployment, the FCC has allowed nationwide wireless carriers to commit to individual compliance plans. Where wireless carriers have violated the terms of their compliance plans, these violations have led to enforcement actions.

The precise rollout of Phase II service, like that of Phase I, depends in large part on when the PSAP makes a request to the wireless carrier for Phase II service. PSAPs must have the ability to upgrade their systems to receive location information and have cost-recovery mechanisms in place before a wireless carrier must implement Phase II pursuant to a PSAP request. Unfortunately, many jurisdictions appear not to have the required funding to upgrade their PSAPs so that they are technologically ready to support Phase II implementation.

Phase II implementation requires wireless carriers to select either a handset-based or network-based solution. Wireless carriers that use network-based solutions must deploy Phase II capability to 50 percent of the PSAP's coverage area or population within six months of a valid request, and to 100 percent of the PSAP's coverage area or population within 18 months of a

PSAP request, unless the parties agree upon a different schedule. Wireless carriers choosing a handset-based solution must complete any necessary upgrades to their systems within six months of a PSAP request. Additionally, the rules provide for specific benchmark dates by which these carriers must begin to sell and activate a certain percentage of handsets that provide location information. By December 31, 2005, these carriers must ensure that 95 percent of their customers' handsets are location-capable.

The 2005 date is popularly referred to as the final implementation date of Phase II wireless E911. It is worth noting, however, that the December 31, 2005 date requires only that carriers choosing a handset-based Phase II solution ensure that at least 95 percent of their subscribers have location-capable handsets. By that date, the FCC also anticipates that carriers using network-based solutions will have deployed Phase II at many more PSAPs, but precisely when each PSAP becomes Phase II capable is dependent on the timing of the PSAP request and the PSAP's readiness. As the Commission does not have jurisdiction over PSAPs, there is no corresponding requirement that PSAPs actually be able to receive Phase II data at that time.

According to reports submitted to the FCC by the nationwide wireless carriers, Phase II has been deployed in 25 states, to approximately 400 localities across the country, and more than 800 PSAPs. Multiple wireless carriers are providing Phase II service to their customers in metropolitan areas such as Houston, Dallas/Fort Worth, Chicago, East St. Louis, as well as Rhode Island. At least one wireless carrier has deployed Phase II service in cities such as Kansas City, Miami, Richmond, San Antonio, and Indianapolis. Mid-sized carriers have also begun deploying Phase II. These carriers have deployed in smaller cities such as Charlotte, North

Carolina, Amarillo, Texas, and Bristol, Tennessee, and in rural areas of Arkansas, Alabama, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.

Additionally, with respect to location-capable handsets, every nationwide carrier using a handset-based approach is offering at least one location-capable handset model, in accordance with applicable benchmarks. Last month, Verizon Wireless reported that it is offering its customers ten different GPS-enabled handset models, and Sprint PCS is offering fifteen location-capable handset models. Sprint reported that it has sold over 8.8 million GPS-enabled handsets.

III. FCC Actions Promoting Continued E911 Deployment

To further promote the successful implementation and deployment of nationwide E911, the FCC has engaged in four major areas of activity: (1) enforcement, (2) implementation, (3) investigation of technical and operational challenges, and (4) outreach and coordination. As discussed below, all four areas are essential to ensure that E911 deployment moves forward as swiftly and effectively as possible.

A. Enforcing FCC Directives

The FCC has not hesitated to use its enforcement power when wireless carriers are not justified in failing to meet the FCC's requirements. When the FCC reported to the House Telecommunications Subcommittee on the status of E911 in 2001, we indicated that individual compliance plans for the nationwide carriers were in place. Since that time, the Commission has taken the following actions where carriers have failed to comply with these plans:

- Entered into consent decrees with AT&T Wireless (June 2002) and Cingular Wireless (May 2002) regarding deployment of E911 over their Time-Division Multiple Access (TDMA) Networks, notwithstanding the fact that both carriers plan to phase out much of their TDMA networks as they transition to the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) standard. These consent decrees require AT&T Wireless and Cingular Wireless each to make a \$100,000 voluntary contribution to the U.S. Treasury, to deploy E911 Phase II technology at their TDMA cell sites, and to provide Phase II service in response to PSAP requests by specified benchmark dates. The consent decrees also require the carriers to make automatic penalty payments for failure to comply with deployment benchmarks and to submit periodic reports on the status of their compliance efforts. Both carriers have met their benchmarks to date: AT&T Wireless has deployed Phase II technology to over 2,000 cell sites, with nearly 1,200 of those sites currently providing Phase II service, and Cingular has deployed Phase II technology at over 2,400 cell sites, with Phase II operational in nearly 1,700 of those sites.
- After issuing a Notice of Apparent Liability against AT&T Wireless for apparent E911 violations concerning its GSM network, the Commission and AT&T Wireless entered into a consent decree in October 2002 to address these apparent violations. This decree requires AT&T Wireless to make a \$2 million voluntary contribution to the U.S. Treasury, to deploy E911 Phase II technology at its GSM cell sites and provide Phase II service in response to PSAP requests by specified benchmark dates. The consent decree also requires AT&T to make automatic penalty payments for failure to comply with deployment benchmarks and to submit periodic reports on the status of its compliance

efforts. AT&T Wireless has met its benchmarks to date, reporting that it has deployed Phase II technology to 2,000 cell sites on its GSM network.

- In March, the FCC issued a Notice of Apparent Liability against T-Mobile for apparent E911 violations relating to its Phase I deployment, finding T-Mobile apparently liable for a forfeiture in the amount of \$1,250,000.
- Recently, the Enforcement Bureau initiated an investigation into Cingular Wireless's and T-Mobile's deployment of E911 Phase II with respect to their GSM networks and will make a recommendation to the FCC shortly on how to proceed. We hope to have compliance plans and schedules in place soon.

The Commission continues to monitor each carrier's progress in deploying Phase I and Phase II E911 and to investigate alleged failures to meet FCC-mandated benchmarks. Where warranted, the FCC will continue to take quick action to ensure that wireless carriers comply with the FCC's E911 rules and regulations. In other cases where the public interest warrants, we have provided additional flexibility in situations where delayed compliance is beyond the wireless carrier's control. Such cases are carefully scrutinized and reviewed.

It is worth noting that the three wireless carriers deploying GSM networks have experienced difficulties in meeting their benchmarks due to technology problems. The Commission has met repeatedly with these carriers to emphasize the seriousness of the existing benchmarks. Further, these carriers were referred to the FCC's Enforcement Bureau. Within the past several months, all three carriers have announced their decision to switch location technologies to ensure more rapid deployment and improved performance of their E911 systems.

B. Moving Towards Full Implementation

Although significant progress is being made, we still have a long way to go before wireless E911 is deployed across the Nation. In addition to actively enforcing the existing rules, the FCC is also looking at new ways to help speed and smooth E911 implementation. To this end, over the past year, the FCC has made a number of E911-related rulings, including:

- Setting a deployment schedule for smaller, including many rural, non-nationwide carriers to begin to provide E911 service. Under this schedule, mid-sized carriers were required to begin deployment by March 1, 2003 and small carriers are scheduled to begin deployment this fall. Like the nationwide carriers, mid-sized carriers must report regularly on their E911 deployment progress, and smaller carriers must provide a report outlining their plans for E911 deployment later this summer.
- Clarifying PSAP readiness issues and providing for a certification process for wireless carriers where wireless carriers have completed all necessary steps toward E911 implementation that are not dependent on PSAP readiness.
- Providing guidance on cost recovery issues regarding the demarcation point between PSAPs and carriers.
- Issuing a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking public comment on whether and how the 911 and E911 rules should apply to technologies not currently covered by the rules, such as Mobile Satellite Service, telematics services, and emerging voice services and devices; and seeking updated information on issues involved with the delivery of callback and location information on 911 calls from stations served by Multi-Line Telephone Systems, such as PBXs. This item provides an early forum for the possible extension of our 911 and E911 rules.

In other instances, the Commission directly responded to concerns raised by several of the national public safety organizations regarding the unnecessary diversion of PSAP resources to respond to unintentional or harassing 911 calls from wireless phones. In October 2002 and pursuant to a specific public safety request, the Commission issued a public notice clarifying that its 911 call-forwarding rule does not preclude wireless carriers from blocking fraudulent 911 calls from non-service initialized (NSI) phones pursuant to state and local laws. The public notice highlighted the waste of public safety resources that results from fraudulent 911 calls made from NSI handsets, which lack a call back number. The Commission continues to look at the issue of NSI wireless phones through an ongoing proceeding.

In December 2002, the Commission released a Staff Report on unintentional wireless 911 calls, which occur when a consumer accidentally dials 911, often through use of a pre-programmed auto-dial key. The report confirmed that unintentional wireless 911 calls pose a significant problem for PSAPs, and outlined steps that industry participants can and should take to address the problem. For example, the major wireless carriers have requested that their vendors cease shipping phones with an active, auto-dial 911 feature. In nearly all cases, wireless phones distributed by these carriers have not had an auto-dial 911 feature since at least February of 2002. In addition, the Cellular Telecommunications and Internet Association (CTIA) has modified its handset certification program such that certified handsets may not be pre-programmed with an auto-dial 911 feature.

The FCC has also received a commissioned report of an independent expert, Dale Hatfield, which examined the technical and operational issues affecting wireless E911

implementation. Mr. Hatfield, a widely respected telecommunications expert with nearly four decades of experience, met with interested parties to elicit more detailed information regarding E911 deployment issues. In October 2002, he released a report to the Commission containing his findings and recommendations. The Commission sought public comment on the Hatfield Report late last year.

In his report, Mr. Hatfield made a number of findings identifying obstacles to E911 deployment, which include:

- Wireless carrier implementation issues
- ILEC cost recovery and technical issues
- Cost recovery and PSAP funding issues
- Ongoing need for PSAP education, assistance, and outreach
- Lack of comprehensive stakeholder coordination

While the FCC had already become aware of many of the issues raised in the Hatfield Report and was working on potential solutions, the Hatfield Report suggested many novel approaches, which the FCC is actively studying and, in some cases, implementing. For instance, the Commission is taking a greater role in formal coordination through the FCC's E911 Coordination Initiative.

C. Overcoming Technical and Operational Challenges

The Hatfield Report confirmed that ILECs play a critical role in the deployment of wireless E911 service. ILECs generally serve as 911 system operators, providing trunks, facilities, and services necessary to connect wireless carriers and PSAPs. For Phase II, they also provide the Automatic Location Identification (ALI) databases that are used for wireline 911 and must be upgraded to accommodate wireless ALI data. The FCC has sought cooperation from the ILECs to fulfill their E911 implementation role. In response to concerns from both the PSAP and wireless communities, late last summer, the FCC requested additional information from the six major ILECs regarding their role in E911 deployment, including specific information on technical issues and cost recovery plans.

Additionally, Commission staff has been working with state commissions, wireless carriers, PSAPs, and ILECs regarding specific cost issues that have been brought to our attention. In one instance, the Commission staff issued a letter regarding a dispute over responsibility for the costs to upgrade ALI databases for purposes of deploying wireless E911 Phase II service. We fully intend to take action where appropriate to ensure that actual wireless E911 deployment is not delayed because of perceived regulatory disputes. In an Order released last fall, the Commission similarly expressed concern over the potential for delay due to a lack of cooperation by the ILECs and noted that it would consider enforcement actions or additional regulatory obligations, if necessary.

The Hatfield Report also confirmed that there continue to be E911 implementation issues beyond the Commission's purview. Specifically, we note that PSAP funding continues to be a

significant barrier to deployment. Although cost recovery mechanisms are in place in a number of states, these funds have on occasion been diverted for other uses unrelated to E911. If PSAPs do not have funds in place to upgrade their systems, Phase II service will not be implemented in those areas. We know that this issue already has been raised by the Congressional E911 Caucus, and we applaud its efforts to resolve this critical issue. This issue was one of the numerous issues addressed at the E911 Coordination Initiative's April 29 meeting.

Other issues that have been raised with the FCC include E911 compliance following the implementation of Local Number Portability and how to overcome related technical difficulties, and E911 accuracy concerns associated with rural carriers, particularly those with TDMA networks. We are currently evaluating these issues, and hope to have further guidance on these issues later this year.

D. Coordination and Outreach

Wireless E911 implementation is a highly complex process that requires an enormous amount of coordination. Both coordination and outreach are essential components in the Commission's ongoing effort to facilitate E911 implementation. Most recently, the Commission kicked-off of the E911 Coordination Initiative on April 29, 2003.

This widely attended meeting brought together representatives from the federal government, the public safety community, wireless carriers, ILECs, and other interested stakeholders to share experiences and devise strategies for expediting E911 deployment. All of the Commissioners participated in the event, as did Dale Hatfield, who gave a brief oral report.

The meeting addressed ongoing implementation issues such as PSAP funding, wireless carrier implementation and prioritization, issues relating to LECs, and challenges faced by rural carriers. Panelists shared their success stories on the various topics, in order to inform other similarly situated stakeholders how to overcome deployment obstacles. The stakeholders addressed a number of themes, including:

- Strong leadership and vision is essential to ensure swift E911 deployment
- State or regional E911 points of contact are critical for carriers to ensure swift deployment
- For PSAP readiness, cost recovery and proper management and distribution of funds are key steps toward ensuring wireless E911 rollout

This meeting was the first in a series of more formal coordination efforts to allow the Commission to facilitate E911 deployment. The next meeting of the E911 Coordination Initiative will take place in the fall.

In addition to the Coordination Initiative, both my Bureau and the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB) have provided ongoing outreach to consumers, public safety, tribal governments and state legislators on E911 issues. CGB staff will be meeting with the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, the National Congress of American Indians and the National Conference of State Legislators this summer to discuss the FCC's E911 Coordination Initiative and to discuss ways we can work together to speed E911 implementation. To educate the public, CGB recently established a Consumer Alert on

unintentional 911 calls and WTB has established a web page focused solely on 911 and E911 issues.

The FCC has also established points of contact designated by the Governors in all 50 states and three of the U.S. territories to work jointly to identify E911 funding and deployment solutions. The FCC expects to hold an E911 roundtable later this year with the Governors' designees as part of an ongoing dialogue to discuss E911 options and identify solutions. Additionally, the FCC intends to engage its Local and State Government Advisory Committee to work on the development of a state-by-state funding and implementation survey. The Commission also will continue working with tribal governments to facilitate the deployment of E911 on tribal lands. Through these cooperative efforts, the FCC seeks to facilitate the expeditious deployment of E911.

We also have been monitoring the E911 coordination efforts of other organizations to enhance stakeholder coordination and applaud the joint efforts of industry and public safety. For example, public safety outreach efforts such as the National Emergency Numbering Association's Strategic Wireless Action Teams Initiative and the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials' Project Locate have been instrumental in ensuring that local PSAPs are aware of their responsibilities and assisting with on-the-ground implementation efforts. Additionally, the joint industry and public safety group, Emergency Services Interconnection Forum (ESIF), an arm of the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions, has worked to develop and refine technical and operational interconnection issues to ensure wireless 911 will be available to everyone.

Earlier this year, ESIF submitted to the Commission a PSAP Readiness Package, which was developed through the joint efforts of wireless carriers, 911 service system providers, and public safety organizations. This serves as a useful tool for PSAPs that are unfamiliar with the E911 request process. The Department of Transportation (DOT) has also established a Wireless E-911 Initiative, which includes efforts to bring national leadership and attention to the E911 issue, to provide technical assistance and guidance and training to accelerate PSAP readiness, and to engage the Nation's leading information technology experts in a reexamination of the technological approach to E911. FCC and DOT staffs have been actively involved in coordination; FCC staff has attended DOT's Wireless E-911 Initiative Steering Council meetings and DOT in turn participated in the FCC's Coordination Initiative meeting. Most recently, DOT issued a Wireless E911 Initiative Priority Action Plan outlining six urgent priorities to E911 deployment, and I commend the DOT for its efforts.

IV. Conclusion

Wireless communications have become increasingly important to our national communications infrastructure and in our everyday lives. The United States is the only nation in the world that has required that all wireless calls have E911 capability to assist the public safety community in performing their vital work. All the stakeholders who have worked on this process – Congress, the public safety community, wireless carriers, ILECs, state and local governments, equipment vendors, technology vendors, and the Commission – should be proud of this accomplishment. These very same stakeholders must continue to be diligent in completing the availability of Nationwide E911 in the near future.

For its part, the Commission continues to make wireless E911 deployment one of its highest priorities. We have come a long way, and through some difficult times, but we are optimistic about the future of wireless E911. We appreciate Congress's efforts, and in particular, the efforts of members of this Subcommittee, to keep this issue in the forefront. We plan to continue our efforts on various fronts, but especially, the E911 Coordination Initiative, to ensure that E911 deployment continues apace.

I would like to thank the Subcommittee for this opportunity to provide information on wireless E911. I look forward to hearing your views and answering any questions you may have.