

**PRESS STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER KATHLEEN Q. ABERNATHY**

Re: IP-Enabled Services, WC Docket No. 04-36, First Report and Order; E911 Requirements for IP-Enabled Service Providers, WC Docket No. 05-196, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

The most basic duty this Commission has is to assure that its rules and policies promote public safety. This responsibility is particularly acute where, as in this case, consumers act on the reasonable expectation that new technology has the same capabilities as existing technology.

The item we have adopted today will enable us to deal with the critically important issue of making E911 available on all Voice over Internet telephone services.

No one can make right the tragic instances that we have heard our witnesses recount today. But we must do what we can, as soon as we can, to make sure such needless losses don't recur as more and more people subscribe to this service – a service that is a critical piece of our communications infrastructure.

This item takes a giant step forward in bringing about 911 capability by all VoIP providers. Just as important, it will help safeguard consumers in the interim prior to full implementation by requiring all VoIP providers to affirmatively warn consumers of current limitations in E911 availability.

The road to full compliance will not be easy, and the Commission will almost certainly be called on to take further steps to bring it about. But we have begun the process by setting forth in clear and unambiguous terms the responsibilities of all the parties who must work together to make it happen. And the very specific consumer advisory rules that we are imposing on all VoIP providers in the interim should help prevent future tragedies like those we have heard recounted first-hand today.

Can we wave a magic wand and make all VoIP devices E911-capable immediately? Unfortunately no, we can't. We know there will be a number of situations in which making the technology work is going to prove very challenging. And we do not want to prevent new, lower cost communication alternatives from being offered to consumers. But if our item today stands for making E911 service available on all Voice over Internet telephones, and will provide consumers with the information they need to use the right communications technology in an emergency.

No one can make right the tragic instances told to us by the witnesses who appeared before us today. But we must do what we can, as soon as we can, to make sure such needless losses don't recur as more and more people subscribe to VoIP service.

The road to full compliance will not be easy, and the Commission will almost certainly be called on to take further steps to bring it about. But the important thing is that with this item we have begun, setting forth in anything, it stands for the fact that this Commission is united in solving whatever problems, and doing whatever is necessary, to make sure that Americans will be empowered, not hurt, by this technology that can otherwise offer them so many advantages.