

**Remarks of FCC Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein  
at the Federal Communications Commission's  
Independent Panel on Hurricane Katrina  
Washington, DC  
January 30, 2006**

Thank you all so much for your willingness to serve on this blue ribbon panel. Your convening today represents a crucial step in the effort to move forward in the aftermath of a season of devastating hurricanes. And you are in able hands thanks to Nancy Victory, who so thoughtfully agreed to serve as your chair. I wish I could join you in person, but I am on travel today.

I want to thank the Chairman for convening this group. It can play a key role in improving our nation's disaster preparedness, network reliability, and communications among first responders. We need efforts like this to achieve constant and never ending improvement to protect ourselves in the event of future disasters, be they natural or man-made.

I will never forget the horrifying images I witnessed first hand when we visited the Gulf Coast. The devastation was even worse than I could have ever imagined.

From our special FCC meeting in Atlanta last September, to the first meeting of this Panel today, I remain incredibly impressed with how well the telecommunications industry has responded. In Atlanta, we heard it from our panelists, and saw it in the eyes of hundreds of communications workers who were laboring around the clock to restore connectivity to the Gulf Coast. I also saw it in the eyes of those who lost their homes, yet still came out to work and to help, as well. I saw how critical it is that we all work closely together – the Commission included – in times of crisis.

We all understand how critical telecommunications are not only for emergency personnel, but for citizens desperate to find out what's happening with their families and friends.

We need your help to assess what worked well in Katrina's aftermath, and more importantly, how we can improve our preparedness and response. We did well, but we can do better, and we must do better...to help wireless, wireline, media, satellite, and public safety all better prepare, respond, and recover from an emergency or disaster.

My trip to the Gulf Coast, and subsequent discussions with many of you and others in the industry, helped me understand the lessons learned. But there is much more to learn, more to be done, and a lot of hard questions yet to be asked – about issues such as redundancy, planning, reliability, and interoperability.

So I applaud all of you involved with this Panel for helping us tackle these issues. I also commend Chairman Martin and the FCC staff for their response to Hurricane Katrina. A disaster like this demonstrates how important it is that we all work together in times of crisis.

Thank you again for all of your effort and the hard work ahead.