

STATEMENT OF FCC CHAIRMAN KEVIN J. MARTIN

I am proud to support today's vote to establish a Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau at the Commission.

The events on September 11th, 2001 and last year's Hurricane season underscored our dependence on our national telecommunications infrastructure. During times of emergency, it is critical that the needs of the public safety community are met.

Today the Commission takes the significant step of consolidating its public safety, national security, and disaster management policy making, planning, and outreach activities into a single Bureau – the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau. This Bureau will provide a single central hub for the development of policies and rules to promote reliable communications for public safety, national security, and disaster management. The Bureau will be tasked to expend all of its talent and resources to make sure that the Commission does its part to support reliable emergency communications and address the needs of first responders, law enforcement, and emergency response personnel.

One of the Commission's strategic goals is to ensure that public safety, health, defense, and emergency personnel, as well as all consumers in need, have reliable communications during emergencies and crises. The Commission must work to strengthen and ensure the nation's critical communications infrastructure's continued reliability, interoperability, redundancy, and rapid restoration.

The Commission has a record of acting to ensure public safety priorities are met. For example, last May, the Commission took action to extend emergency access requirements to new technologies. Anyone who dials 911 has a reasonable expectation that he or she will be connected to an emergency operator; this expectation exists whether that person is dialing 911 from a traditional wireline phone, a wireless phone, or a VoIP phone.

The new Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau will enhance the Commission's ability to continue ensuring public safety priorities are met and that consumers have access to reliable communications during emergencies and crises. The new Bureau's coordinated efforts with the public safety community, other governmental agencies, and industry should also promote reliability, interoperability, redundancy, and rapid restorability of the nation's critical communications infrastructure. I look forward to working with the staff of the new Bureau and my colleagues on the Commission as together we work to achieve our public safety and homeland security goals.