

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN KEVIN J. MARTIN

The events of September 11th, 2001 and last year's Hurricane season underscored America's reliance on an effective national telecommunications infrastructure.

Public safety is one of the Commission's and my top priorities. We have a history of taking action to ensure the operability of the nation's communications networks.

Last year for example, in response to Hurricane Katrina, the Commission worked around the clock to cut red tape and ensure a rapid restoration of communications to the impacted region.

During the past year, the Commission has also worked to ensure that all Americans have access to emergency services, irrespective of the type of communications technology used to reach these services.

With the new Public Safety and Homeland Security bureau, the Commission is demonstrating its commitment to build on these accomplishments.

One of the bureau's primary functions is develop and implement communications policies that enhance public safety, including addressing the spectrum needs of the public safety community. To that end, the bureau will assume responsibility for completing the 800 MHz re-banding process and resolving any related interference issues.

The bureau will also serve as an informational clearinghouse for public safety and emergency response issues as they relate to Commission initiatives. It will work to ensure robust and reliable communications services by reaching out to stakeholders in order to encourage best practices, develop preparedness plans, and promote network reliability. And in times of emergency the bureau will lead the Commission's efforts to expedite relief and ensure that communications in effected areas are quickly restored.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Commission and the staff of the new bureau to build on what we've accomplished and to meet future challenges to better ensure the safety of our nation and its citizens.