

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER DEBORAH TAYLOR TATE**

Re: Implementing a Nationwide, Broadband, Interoperable Public Safety Network in the 700 MHz Band; Development of Operational, Technical and Spectrum Requirements for Meeting Federal, State and Local Public Safety Communications Requirements through the Year 2010, Ninth Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, (PS Docket No. 06-229, WT Docket No. 96-86).

Earlier this year, I had an opportunity to hear local public safety personnel recount their experiences on the ground during the tragic events of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Their eyewitness accounts underscore how important it is that our nation's first responders have access to reliable and redundant communications in the event of an emergency, and how much remains to be done before those tools are available. A key challenge to effective emergency communications is the current shortfall in the number of interoperable systems that enable different public safety entities to communicate with each other and coordinate their efforts when time is of the essence. Therefore, it is *critical* that we take steps to improve public safety interoperability for all types of disasters – whether terrorist, natural, or even a health pandemic.

With this Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, we propose a centralized and national approach to maximize public safety access to interoperable, broadband spectrum in the 700 MHz band, and, at the same time, foster and promote the development and deployment of advanced broadband applications, related radio technologies, and modern, IP-based system architecture. I look forward to working with my fellow Commissioners on this proceeding and hearing from public safety entities, state and local officials, and all interested stakeholders regarding what we can do to ensure the reliability and interoperability of communications in order to better protect all Americans.