

**REMARKS OF FCC COMMISSIONER DEBORAH TAYLOR TATE
APCO INTERNATIONAL'S 73RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION
Baltimore, Maryland
August 9, 2007**

Good afternoon! Thank you, Willis, for inviting me to appear before you here in Baltimore. I truly appreciate the opportunity to deliver this message. And, thank you Wanda for your service, your insights and your friendship.

There is nothing like being on the last session of the last day. The only worse thing is, in addition, you are the only thing standing between the last session and a party. Well, I understand I am standing between you and the ESPN Zone- so I'll be brief!

I know that Chairman Martin was here earlier in the week, and also the head of our Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau and your colleague- Chief Derrick Poarch and a number of key FCC staff. I want to join them in commending you for all you do to keep our country safe.

And by the way, last week I had the chance to visit one of your partners, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in Alexandria, Virginia.

I share your commitment to the protection of children, and want thank you for helping find these children and bring their predators to justice.

You make a difference every day as public safety communications professionals. In your own words, the 911 system is the connection between the eyes and ears of the public and the emergency response system in the U.S.; you are often the first to know of emergencies of all magnitude; making 911 a significant homeland security asset.

We have come a long way since 1968, when AT&T announced the establishment of 911 as the emergency code throughout the U.S. Now there are over 6,000 911 PSAPs [public safety answering points] serving more than 3,000 counties and parishes throughout the U.S., and PSAPs answer more than 200 million 911 calls each year in the U.S. That's truly a remarkable statistic.

And, as you all know, the communications marketplace continues to evolve, with new ideas and technologies developing at an incredible pace- challenging us to adapt to these changes. For instance a growing number of wireless calls are made using wireless and Internet-based communications

services, and in fact, in 2004 Congress established Enhanced 911, or E911, as a “high national priority” as part of our Nation’s homeland security and public safety.

The crucial issue of public safety and homeland security is perhaps the FCC’s most important area of authority. Certainly it is to me, personally.

We must endeavor to enhance our communications infrastructure, and public safety and emergency response capabilities in the event of a natural disaster, or pandemic, or terrorist attack. We must be prepared for the known as well as the unknown.

I am proud to report, since I have been at the Commission, we have taken significant steps to strengthen public safety and homeland security- usually upon your sound advice.

The Commission’s Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau has also been active. I was honored to attend part of the First Responders Summit which included expert panels composed of representatives from the public safety community, government, and the communications industry and a roundtable discussion on key issues related to emergency preparedness and

response. Many of you participated and we look forward to this continuing dialogue.

In addition, the Commission implemented various recommendations of the Commission's Independent Panel Reviewing the Impact of Hurricane Katrina on Communications Networks. The Commission intends for the programs and policies stemming from the Panel's work to improve emergency response capabilities and assist first responders, the communications industry and all levels of government to communicate effectively with one another during emergencies. I heard first hand at our hearing in Jackson, Mississippi, and our order mandates certain proactive steps for telephone service providers and commercial mobile service radio providers to ensure preparedness for future emergencies. The requirements include installation of emergency power generators and for service providers to establish basic interoperability methods.

The Commission also directed its Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau to develop and implement an awareness program to educate public safety agencies about alternative communications technologies, to establish a method to ascertain communication systems status during an emergency, and to ensure that first responders have the proper credentials to accomplish

their jobs during an emergency. We must be better prepared to respond in the face of natural disasters – this week’s bridge and mine collapse – and other types of incidents, such as a pandemic, industrial accident, environmental incident, or terrorist attack.

After months of discussions and negotiations, and even a few new ideas and entrants, the Commission made a historic decision regarding the upcoming 700 MHz spectrum auction. Not only is this spectrum important to potentially further deployment of wireless broadband services, the band potentially provides better in-building coverage than higher frequencies, which could help improve 911 access and location system performance.

You asked the Commission to make additional spectrum from the 700 MHz band available to improve first responder interoperable voice, data and video communications capabilities through the creation of a public-private partnership in a new “D” block.

And you asked the Commission to take action this year.

And we did.

I applaud the collaborative efforts and contributions of the communications

industry and public safety entities and especially APCO's leadership, which have worked hard to address the policy goals and technical issues that make these necessary improvements possible. My colleagues and I are keenly aware of how critical reliable communications technologies are when public safety or homeland security concerns become paramount. I am confident that the Commission will continue to do all that it can to strengthen and protect our Nation's communications infrastructure, and I am eager to work with Congress as we continue to address policies that will help improve our public safety and homeland security. We are committed to keeping the 800 MHz rebanding on track towards its conclusion and continue to respond to your concerns.

In closing, I hope that we continue to maintain a dialogue on these various exciting issues, and invite you to inspire us with new ideas and experiences—both good and bad so that we can establish strong and vital national policy that enables you to save lives every day all across America and to keep our homeland safe and connected. Let me make one last pitch and request your help over the next – well – to be exact 558 days – 9 hours and 12 minutes – when the DTV transition occurs. Because as much as we enjoy our TV, it is yet another way to keep Americans informed and safe during a disaster.

Thank you for all you do and for the invitation to be here today. I look forward to hearing from you, and I will be pleased to answer any questions.

Thank you, Mr. [Willis] Carter, and congratulations on a terrific meeting!