

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN JULIUS GENACHOWSKI

Re: Consumer Information and Disclosure; Truth-in-Billing and Billing Format; IP-Enabled Services

Protecting and empowering American consumers is one of the Commission's most essential responsibilities.

I thank the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau for their hard work on today's item, which advances the Commission's efforts to ensure that consumers have access to the information they need.

I want to emphasize that the task of protecting and empowering consumers is the responsibility of not only the Consumer Bureau, but of every single Bureau and Office at the Commission. Every decision this Commission makes—big and small—affects the day-to-day lives of American consumers. And each of us who has the privilege of working at this institution—regardless of Bureau or Office—is responsible for ensuring that our agency's decisions are always in the interest of consumers of communications services.

Today's Notice addresses the protection and empowerment of American consumers. Specifically, we seek to ensure that consumers have the information they need to make the market work.

I can't think of a more important moment to be considering these issues. Despite signs of stabilization in the economy, times are still tough. Many Americans are learning to do more with less. A surprise charge on a monthly bill or a new service that does not perform as advertised can be a major budget-buster, especially as household spending on communications grows ever larger. Today's notice will help the Commission build a record on ways to ensure that consumers understand what they are signing up for.

And let's face it, the communications marketplace is a pretty confusing place today, as a variety of sources cited in today's item demonstrate. Technology has brought us a lot of new choices, but can also lead to confusion about how to evaluate new options coming on the market.

The good news is that technology can also help and in very significant ways. It can give consumers access to new information and present old information in newer and better ways. This inquiry provides the agency with an important opportunity to understand how to make sure that information and technology is part of the solution when it comes to finding ways to protect and empower consumers.

I look forward to seeing the results of this NOI and identifying specific strategies the FCC can adopt to improve the lives of American consumers.