

**Prepared Remarks of Chairman Julius Genachowski
Federal Communications Commission**

“Strengthening Public Safety Infrastructure and Emergency Response Capabilities”

**Communications Security, Reliability and Interoperability Council
Washington, D.C.
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Thank you to the Co-Chairs of the Communications Security, Reliability and Interoperability Council (CSRIC), Chris Fisher of APCO and Bill Smith of AT&T, for inviting me here today and for your remarks. Your leadership on this important council is welcomed and appreciated. Thanks to Admiral Barnett and the staff of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau for putting together today’s meeting. Thanks to my colleagues Commissioners Copps, McDowell, and Clyburn for joining me at this important event. And for those of you from out of town, welcome to Washington, D.C., and thank you for coming all this way to be with us today.

I would like to acknowledge Jeffery Goldthorp for his work on CSRIC. He is in a difficult position and we are very lucky to have him working on this issue. I would also like to thank Bruce Gottlieb has been the point person in my office working on CSRIC.

I am pleased to be here at the first meeting of CSRIC, which will carry on the important work of strengthening our nation’s communications infrastructure and emergency response capabilities. We used to have multiple councils at the FCC working on these topics. It is a big step forward that we are now going to look at public safety and network issues in a way that properly reflects the tremendous convergence that is affecting nearly everything the FCC does right now.

Before we begin our meeting today, let me start by recognizing Commissioner Copps for his leadership as Acting Chair of the agency earlier this year -- and especially for re-chartering and seeking nominations for CSRIC this spring, which was a crucial step in our being here today.

I also want to recognize the work of our Chief of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, Rear Admiral Jamie Barnett. Most of you have probably had a chance to work with Admiral Barnett by now, so I do not have to tell you how fortunate we all are to have him here at the Commission. My first request of Admiral Barnett when he arrived at the FCC was to conduct a 30-day review of the Commission’s public safety readiness. The fact that a detailed and extremely helpful report was delivered exactly 30 days later is a testament to Admiral Barnett’s leadership and to his great staff. That was a big step forward and even now he and the staff of the Bureau are hard at work implementing the recommendations of that process.

One of the important lessons to come out of that exercise was the importance of collaboration and cooperation among industry, state and local public safety officials, and the federal government. I am sure that this council will play an important role in helping Adm. Barnett continue the work of improving the nation’s readiness for disaster when it comes to our critical communications networks.

This is a task that all of us here at the Commission take very seriously -- public safety is a top priority. Like many others, I was in south Manhattan on 9/11, and my brother was actually in a

subway that passed under the World Trade Center minutes before the attack. Additionally, earlier in my life I worked as a certified EMT on an ambulance in Manhattan; and also taught CPR. These experiences underscored for me the real threats and dangers we face; they left me humbled by the incredibly challenging and vitally important work our first responders do every day; and they made crystal clear to me the importance of communications in times of crisis.

We are fortunate to have in this room a combination of talent and experience from different professional disciplines and from all segments of the communications industry. This is how we at the Commission get things right: by bringing people from inside and outside the Commission who have each engaged in different parts of the communications ecosystem. Specifically, we need to bring in people with different disciplines and background--lawyers, engineers, business people, and consumer advocates--who all recognize that the best answers to these complex problems come from honest conversations about important issues. We will need all of your assistance in developing creative ideas and recommendations on a number of important public issues before the Commission.

Let me finish by describing some of the areas where I think the FCC can particularly benefit from your input and recommendations about the most critical challenges, based on your knowledge, that currently face our networks.

One of the most important areas is developing and publicizing best practices by communications networks of all sizes and shapes. CSRIC should study which practices already work well, which ones can be improved, and which ones are not working and should be eliminated. I encourage a focus in new media and technology to become a more efficient resource. When I have met first responders around the country, I have been struck they are not always aware of problems that have been solved elsewhere. I encourage the council to consider whether a repository of solutions and best practices would be helpful so first responders—no matter where they are located—can be aware of advances developed elsewhere.

We also need to better understand how to encourage and incentivize coordination and cooperation among emergency communications systems that have traditionally operated in a highly local fashion. We need to look at the technological, economic, and management dimensions of this issue, to find ways to lower costs and improve interoperability.

I recently spoke to members of the military who also face interoperability challenges in Afghanistan and Iraq. I was impressed with the progress the military continues to make in developing interoperable systems and I believe that we on the civilian side can learn from them. In general, we should be open to looking to other resources—like the military—to incorporate for our first responders the best practices that have already been developed and perfected.

CSRIC should also study changes in the way consumers access emergency services. The world is changing and the way people use technology is changing. Emergency 911 service means something different today than in the past. For instance, although I have a landline in my home, my 18-year-old son may not know where it is. The digital convergence that started in the commercial communications segment is making its way to 911 services as new user-devices and network services are used to reach 911 call centers. I encourage the council to investigate what types of devices should be able to access 911. This council can be helpful in developing important strategies and recommendations to address this issue.

On a related issue, we also need to further study the development of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and find ways that it can be updated in light of new technologies and consumer expectations. The country must have an EAS that is right for the 21st Century and I encourage this council to look for ways that this system should work. I am interested to hear where this council thinks we are and where we need to go. The Commission is committed to doing all it can to ensure that the American public receives timely, accurate emergency alerts.

Another critical topic is how consumers are protected online, specifically with regard to cyber security from the perspective of both businesses and consumers. We all know the importance of this issue and how devastation a successful attack on our communications infrastructure can wreak. In this area, the council's job—and the Commission's job—will be a success if the public if the public does not notice our work. Nonetheless, the issue is very important for this council to address.

Finally, I urge you to tackle all of the operational issues, like congestion, that can get in the way of first responders reacting when necessary. In particular, given the incredible increases in usage that our wireless networks have experienced over the past several years, demand has never been greater. While wireless carriers are already working to expand and make their networks more robust, we must ensure that next generation IP-based networks are available so that critical users have access to the communications services they need.

I would like to once again thank the leadership of CSRIC, Jeff Goldthorp, and Admiral Barnett. My fellow Commissioners and I regard this council as incredibly important and we thank all of you for taking on this challenge.