

**PREPARED REMARKS OF CHAIRMAN JULIUS GENACHOWSKI
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

PERSONAL LOCALIZED ALERTING NETWORK LAUNCH EVENT

**NEW YORK, NY
MAY 10, 2011**

Thank you, Mayor Bloomberg for hosting us today, and for your work to make New York a model for the nation on emergency response.

It's great to be with Administrator Fugate.

And thank you to all the wireless providers who are making today's announcement possible: AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon.

It's great to be in New York. I grew up here and went to high school and college in the City. In college, I became a certified EMT, and worked for the Columbia Area Volunteer Ambulance Service.

I was also in New York on 9/11, walking up 8th Avenue to work when the planes struck.

All these experiences have given me deep appreciation for the importance of reliable communications in emergency situations, and a strong resolve to help harness the power of technology to enhance public safety and save lives.

Communications technology – and in particular mobile broadband – has the potential to revolutionize emergency response and save lives.

We've got a lot of work to do to reach our goals, but today we take an important step.

One shortcoming that was exposed on 9/11 is that emergency authorities didn't have the ability to send alerts with vital instructions to people's mobile phones – nor the ability to break through network congestion.

Today, we announce that that's about to change.

The Personal Localized Alerting Network – what we call PLAN – is a new technology and service that will turn your mobile device into an emergency alert device with potentially life-saving messages when public safety is threatened.

How will it do this? PLAN will allow government officials to send text-like alerts to everyone in a targeted geographic area with an enabled mobile device.

Since the alerts are geographically targeted, they will reach the right people, at the right time, with the right messages.

Pretty much everyone already has a plan for their cell phone minutes. Now they've got a free PLAN for their personal safety.

And PLAN creates a fast lane for emergency alerts, so this vital information is guaranteed to get through even if there's congestion in the network.

PLAN could make a tremendous difference during disasters like the recent tornadoes in Alabama where minutes – or even seconds – of extra warning could make the difference between life and death.

We know this kind of alerting system can make a difference.

We saw it in Japan, where they have an earthquake early warning system that issued alerts that saved lives.

This new tool will supplement our existing emergency alert system, which relies on broadcasters and cable providers.

TV and radio will continue to play an essential role in providing critical emergency information, but a multi-platform alerting system will give us the ability to get information to people wherever they are on whatever device they are using at the time.

Today, we are announcing that AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile and Verizon have put PLAN on the fast track.

Thanks to a public-private collaboration with the FCC, FEMA, wireless carriers and the city of New York, PLAN will be up and running in New York City by the end of the year – four months ahead of schedule.

By next April, it will be deployed in cities across the country by not only the carriers represented here today, but also by many others, including Leap, MetroPCS, and USCellular.

There are other things we need to do to seize the opportunities of communications to improve public safety.

To minimize networks from getting congested in the first place, we need to unleash more spectrum for mobile broadband.

That's why we we're working with Congress to authorize voluntary incentive auctions.

Nearly a decade after 9/11, we still don't have a nationwide, funded interoperable public safety network which will allow emergency personnel from different jurisdictions to communicate with each other. That's inexcusable.

Congress is currently considering legislation to fund this critical network and the FCC is working to create a regulatory framework to enable deployment.

Our 9-1-1 system also needs to be updated for the mobile generation.

Right now, if you're in an emergency situation, you can't send a text, photo or video to 9-1-1. When texting is the main way people use their mobile devices, that doesn't make any sense.

Fixing this will require a sustained team effort, and we're actively working with our federal, state and local partners to make this a reality.

Finally, our communications networks need to be reliable and resilient in times of emergency. The FCC is working with carriers to ensure that they are.

Thank you to everybody who's made our progress, and particularly today's announcement possible.

I look forward to working with all of you to harness the incredible opportunities of communications technology to build a safer America.