

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN JULIUS GENACHOWSKI**

Re: *Proposed Extension of Part 4 of the Commission's Rules Regarding Outage Reporting to Interconnected Voice Over Internet Protocol Service Providers and Broadband Internet Service Providers*, PS Docket No. 11-82

The recent devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan as well as the severe tornadoes that ravaged our South two weeks ago are reminders of how vital our communications networks are to everyday life. They also remind us how important it is that our communications networks are reliable and resilient in emergencies.

When disaster strikes, the public must be able to make emergency calls to summon help, particularly those facing life-threatening situations.

The FCC, along with our federal, state, and local partners, has important responsibilities to ensure that our country's critical communications infrastructure remains working in times of crisis. Our current outage reporting requirements have been remarkably successful.

Within hours of Hurricane Katrina hitting land in 2005, the Commission's outage reporting data quickly became the federal government's best source of information about the conditions of critical communications infrastructure in the disaster area. This information improved first responders' situational awareness, helping them quickly understand the damage that had occurred and speed their response.

Our outage reporting requirements have also helped us make our nation's 9-1-1 system more reliable and resilient. Every day, more than 2 billion calls travel over America's communications network. Compiling and analyzing outage reporting information from these networks has helped refine industry best practices, which in turn has reduced the number of communications outages across several categories.

In the wireline category alone, our outage reporting requirements have reduced the estimated number of lost 9-1-1 calls by approximately 50 percent from their 2008 peak. Using reported information, Commission staff has been able to contact affected providers and establish data-driven collaboration.

The American communications landscape is changing. Unfortunately, our existing outage reporting requirements extend only to services delivered over legacy communications technologies – like traditional landline phones connected by copper wire – and not to service delivered over broadband platforms, like Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).

American consumers, businesses, and government increasingly rely on broadband networks and services, and broadband networks today carry a substantial volume of 9-1-1 traffic. Since 2005, the Commission has required providers of interconnected VoIP services to supply 9-1-1 emergency calling capabilities to their customers as a mandatory feature of the service. Today, nearly thirty percent of residential calls are made over VoIP and other broadband-based platforms.

So, if Hurricane Katrina were to happen again, or if there was another attack on American soil, we simply wouldn't have the facts to ascertain the impact on our critical

communications infrastructure. We wouldn't know if people could call their hospital, their fire station or their local police department to get help.

The Communications Act assigns the FCC important responsibilities with respect to public safety communications. Our proposal today is also about fulfilling the critical role that the Commission has been assigned in the Nation's emergency preparedness and response efforts. A Presidential Directive directs the Commission to "ensure continuous operations and reconstitution of critical communications and services." A key component of living up to this responsibility is knowing when and where the communications infrastructure is not working.

The recent events in Japan confirm the importance of tracking and analyzing significant broadband outages. The March earthquake and tsunami not only killed or injured thousands of people in Japan, but also caused greater than \$35 billion in property damage and extensive damage to Japanese communications networks.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the FCC's Japanese counterpart, collects information not only about significant wireline and wireless outages, but also broadband outages. Because of this, immediately after the disaster, the Ministry was able to determine that approximately 500,000 broadband circuits were disconnected or unavailable and take appropriate steps.

As we consider the record that develops, we will be mindful of constraints providers face – as we have for years while implementing our existing outage reporting requirements – while seeking deeper understanding of how outages can be minimized and emergency communications can be made more reliable.

These matters will become even more important as we transition to and implement Next Generation 9-1-1, which is a priority for this Commission. The rules proposed in this item will provide the FCC with better data to evaluate the current reliability of our 9-1-1 system, and strengthen our nation's entire communications infrastructure. They represent another delivery on the recommendations of the National Broadband Plan.

I thank the staff of our Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau and Office of General Counsel for their excellent work on this item.