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

With today's action, the FCC is helping ensure that our communications infrastructure is more resilient. We are helping ensure that consumers will have access to reliable phone service, particularly when calling 9-1-1, whether they are using a traditional telephone or one that operates by interconnected VoIP service.

Public safety is a core mission for the agency. As part of that charge, the FCC has a statutory obligation to ensure the public can make emergency calls, particularly when facing life-threatening situations.

We are working to improve 9-1-1 service and reliability on several fronts. Last year, we laid out a five-point action plan on the transition to Next Generation 9-1-1, which we continue to work on. The plan calls for (1) development of location accuracy mechanisms for NG9-1-1, (2) enabling consumers to send text, photos, and videos to 9-1-1 call centers, (3) facilitating the completion and implementation of NG911 technical standards, (4) developing an NG9-1-1 governance framework, and (5) developing an NG911 funding model. The Plan will increase public access to 9-1-1, provide enhanced information to first responders, and increase the reliability of 9-1-1 networks. As part of that plan, we have launched a proceeding to accelerate the development and deployment of Next Generation 9-1-1, and we have tasked our Communications Security, Reliability, and Interoperability Council advisory committee to make recommendations on incorporating new technologies into the 9-1-1 system.

The action we take today is part of this broader effort. Since its creation in 2005, the FCC's current network outage reporting system – or NORS – has resulted in demonstrably higher reliability for our 9-1-1 system.

The outage data the FCC receives is analyzed and helps us spot trends and patterns that can affect all carriers and networks. The FCC works with the carriers based on actual data to improve day-to-day reliability, resulting in a more resilient communications infrastructure during emergencies.

But the existing Part 4 Outage Reporting rules apply only to legacy communications systems, not to outages occurring over interconnected VoIP services. As a result, during emergencies like Hurricane Irene this past summer, the Commission has not had the information it needs to analyze major outages of interconnected VoIP service.

This is a glaring gap that I'm pleased we are closing today. Approximately 31% of U.S. wireline consumers currently use VoIP as their residential phone service, and the number of VoIP users is only growing. If you need to call 9-1-1, it shouldn't matter who provides your telephone service.

Since public safety is a core mission of the FCC, we will continue to be vigilant to ensure reliability as communications technologies develop. For example, we intend to work with Internet Service Providers on mechanisms for voluntary reporting of broadband outages.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the public safety officials, carriers, cable systems and communications providers who worked with us on this important step to promote communications network reliability and ensure that the 9-1-1 system is secure and robust. I recognize that this requires a commitment on your part, and I appreciate your partnership in this effort.

I also want to thank the staff of our Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau for their superb work on this item.