

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN**

Re: *Facilitating the Deployment of Text-to-911 and Other Next Generation 911 Applications, PS Docket No. 11-153; Framework for Next Generation 911 Deployment, PS Docket No. 10-255*

American consumers exchange billions of text messages per day and for some, particularly the young, it is the primary means of peer-to-peer mobile communications engagement. Many of them assume that when it comes to public safety issues, the system is equipped to handle such an exchange. But, as the record shows, we are not there yet. So I am pleased to support this Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking this afternoon, because promoting Text-to-9-1-1 will provide citizens with enhanced access to emergency communications, in situations where voice interaction could endanger the caller, or a person with physical challenges is unable to speak. Improving the accessibility of our most advanced technologies is not only the right thing to do, it is what Congress has repeatedly told us—most recently with the CVAA—should be a fundamental goal of communications policy.

When industry demonstrates a credible willingness to achieve these important policy goals, we should give it the flexibility which may be needed to meet those goals in a cost effective manner. It is in that spirit that I wish to commend four nationwide wireless carriers -- AT&T, Verizon, Sprint, and T-Mobile -- for memorializing a document that commits them to improving the safety of mobile wireless consumers. In short, these carriers have agreed to deploy, by June 30, 2013, a mechanism for sending bounce back notifications to subscribers, when text-to-9-1-1 is unavailable in their area, telling them they should make a voice phone call to 9-1-1. They also agree to send text to 9-1-1 to from all their wireless consumers to PSAPs, no later than 2014. This agreement will accelerate progress to more than 90 percent of the nation's wireless consumers.

These carriers have also made another important commitment by way of consumer education and outreach. The carriers have been making the assertion that SMS is a store-and-forward messaging technology that was never designed to provide any time-sensitive, mission-critical service. The vast majority of American consumers are not aware of these limits. So I was glad to see, that these four nationwide companies, as well as APCO and NENA, recognize that and, in conjunction with the FCC, will develop an outreach effort to educate consumers about the capabilities and limits of text to 9-1-1. I encourage the parties who signed the voluntary commitment, to seek the advice of the accessibility advocates, as they take steps to comply with their deployment commitments.

Despite these voluntary commitments, I am very pleased the Chairman decided to circulate this Further Notice, that proposes to adopt the voluntary commitments, as final rules, and intends to finalize those rules next year. I thank the Chairman for agreeing with my recommendation to bolster the consumer education and outreach section of the item and emphasize that we must engage the accessibility advocates as we move forward in the proceeding. I was also pleased to see a clear discussion of which over-the-top applications could be subject to this proposed text to 9-1-1 rules.

Thanks are due to Aaron Garza for his presentation, and I wish to commend David Turetsky, and the staff, for carefully examining the difficult implementation issues raised by these proposals.