

**PREPARED REMARKS OF FCC CHAIRMAN JULIUS GENACHOWSKI
TECHNOLOGY TRANSITIONS POLICY TASK FORCE WORKSHOP
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C.
MARCH 18, 2013**

Welcome to the first workshop of the FCC's Technology Transitions Policy Task Force.

Thank you all for joining us. Thank you to our panelists and the FCC staff who organized today's event, in particular our General Counsel Sean Lev, who is interim Director of the Technology Transitions Task Force, and Rebekah Goodheart who is serving as the task force's Deputy Director.

When I arrived at the Commission in 2009, it was clear that this was a time of rapid technological change, and it has only accelerated. At the start of 2009, only 16% of mobile subscribers had smartphones. Now it's over 55%.

Back then, the commercial tablet market didn't exist. Today, roughly one-third of Americans have a tablet or e-reader, and some analyst project tablet sales will surpass PC sales as soon as this year. The percentage of households "cutting the cord" has roughly doubled, and more than a third of U.S. households are now wireless only.

At the FCC, we've been working to make sure our communications policies keep pace with this change. We developed the country's first National Broadband Plan, providing a strategic roadmap for the transition to all-IP networks. As recommended in the plan, we've approved landmark reforms of USF, and overhauled intercarrier compensation. We've sped the transition to next-generation 9-1-1. We've ensured that VoIP service remains accessible to individuals with disabilities. Just last week, I circulated an NPRM proposing that VoIP providers receive direct access to numbers.

The proceeding on direct access to numbers for VoIP was actually a recommendation of our Technical Advisory Council, or TAC. Led by Tom Wheeler, the TAC had another early recommendation relevant to today's session: they said the Commission should, and I quote, "establish a task force to conduct a thorough policy and regulatory review as it relates to the PSTN, which results in policies for the new communication environment."

Following TAC's counsel, in December 2012, I announced the formation of an agency-wide Technology Transitions Task Force to provide recommendations to modernize the Commission's policies, which build on our previous work.

At the time, we said this process would be open and data-driven. Consistent with that promise, we are conducting a series of public workshops, of which this is the first.

Today's main objective is establishing a factual baseline for understanding three key transitions: the evolution of network protocols from TDM to IP, the replacement of copper networks with fiber, and the shift from only wireline service to greater use of wireless service.

We've scheduled three panels, comprised of a broad sector of experts from inside and mainly outside the Beltway – engineers, academics, and CTOs from multiple facets of the industry.

- Panel 1 will examine the technology capabilities of our communications networks today and in the future, including both wireline (copper, fiber and coax) and wireless.

This diverse panel includes respected academics including Mung Chiang of Princeton and MIT's Dina Katabi, as well as some of the vendors – CableLabs, Calix and Alcatel Lucent - that are developing products to enable more reliable and innovative services.

- Panel 2 will examine the adoption and use of various technologies across different demographics groups. The panel will be led by former member of the FCC family, Dr. John Horrigan of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, who will both moderate the panel and provide a general overview of the current usage and demographics.

We'll also have panelists speaking about the unique issues facing different demographic groups, including the disability community, rural America, the business community, and communities of color.

- Finally, Panel 3 will examine the timing of the technology for the technology transition of different networks. The panelists represent multiple facets of the communications industry, with representatives from Cox, Frontier, Qualcomm, Verizon and XO.

Again, thank you to all the panelists for joining us.

By gathering data about the technologies themselves, the way Americans use these technologies, and the drivers for network investment and innovation, the Task Force will be able to help the Commission determine what policies are required in today's and tomorrow's communications marketplace.

While technological advances can change markets, they don't change the FCC's mission. So as we move forward with this effort, we'll be guided by a set of constant, core principles and priorities.

First, competition.

History has shown that competition is our most effective tool for driving innovation and investment, and that smart government policies are vital for ensuring competitive markets. Indeed, the benefits and choices brought by the technology transitions exist because of massive private investment, *and* because of policies that created and maintain the conditions necessary for competition to flourish.

As these transitions move forward, they are changing communications markets, often in ways that can increase competition, particularly for voice services. But they don't automatically ensure competition. So while some like to refer to the "competitive, all-IP world" as if "competition" and "IP" are synonyms, we know that's not true. We need to take a more sophisticated, data-driven approach to determine which policies to keep for today's markets, which to add or modify, and which to eliminate.

Second, consumer protection.

Consumer protection is vital because even with strong investment and innovation promoting policies, competition won't reach everywhere. And because even healthy markets with robust competition can leave consumers subject to abuse.

That's why, for example, we have rules to ensure access to communications technology for Americans with disabilities, to promote transparency and disclosure, and to protect consumer privacy. Consumers need to know that the FCC's got their back.

Third, and closely related, universal service.

The concept of universal access to modern communications is at the heart of our consumer mission and our founding statute, and access to broadband is this generation's universal service imperative. Wired and wireless broadband have become an indispensable platform for innovation, commerce, and civic engagement. To leave large swaths of this country without broadband access in the 21st century is as unthinkable as leaving millions without access to electricity or phone service in the 20th.

Fourth, public safety.

New technologies bring tremendous potential to improve public safety and help first responders. But they also bring some new challenges, like continuity of power. Policies and industry standards need to evolve to ensure that the resiliency of our networks is not diminished as a result of technology transitions.

We laid out these basic principles when we created the Task Force and charged it with providing recommendations to “encourage the technological transitions, empower and protect consumers, promote competition, and ensure network resiliency and reliability.”

These values are the compass that will guide us to the policies that maximize the benefits of broadband for the American people – today and into the future. Today's workshop will help lay a sound factual basis for that work.

I'm pleased that a number of my colleagues are joining us today, as well as Phil Jones, president of NARUC. Let me welcome them up to give a few additional opening thoughts, and then we'll hand it over to our panelists.

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