

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN JULIUS GENACHOWSKI**

Re: *Improving 911 Reliability*, PS Docket No. 13-75; *Reliability and Continuity of Communications Networks, Including Broadband Technologies*, PS Docket No. 11-60.

I'd like to salute the many representatives of PSAPs – 9-1-1 call centers – from around the country who are in the audience today. We appreciate the work you do every day to keep our nation safe, and our action today is intended to ensure that the communications technology you need is there when you need it most – for you and for the millions of Americans you protect.

I'd also like to recognize Barbara Jaeger, President of the National Emergency Number Association. NENA has been a strong advocate on behalf of 9-1-1 professionals, and consistently helpful in our efforts to improve public safety communications.

Last June, 9-1-1 call centers across the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic states got a wake-up call when the derecho storm struck, causing dangerous 9-1-1 outages. In some instances, this lasted for several days.

All outages are absolutely unacceptable. Especially, when it comes to communicating with emergency personnel during disasters, our policy has to be zero tolerance for outages.

So we immediately launched an investigation, and two months ago our Public Safety Bureau issued a strong and thorough report examining the failures of 9-1-1 communications after the derecho.

A key take-away from that report was that many of the problems encountered could have been avoided if best practices for improving reliability had been in place and rigorously followed. Best practices don't protect the people if they are not put in place.

We must ensure that these best practices are put into practice.

Today, the Commission takes an essential step to do so – to ensure Americans can rely on 9-1-1 networks in the event of major disasters.

Today's NPRM proposes that 9-1-1 service providers regularly audit 9-1-1 circuits for physical diversity, improving network reliability and resiliency by helping identify and correct single points of failure.

It also proposes ensuring 9-1-1 providers maintain adequate central office backup power, supported by appropriate maintenance, testing, and records retention.

And it promotes physically diverse network monitoring and control links, providing increased resiliency and accurate situational awareness during communications outages.

Implementation approaches range from reporting and certification requirements to mandatory reliability standards, enforced through inspections and compliance reviews.

Building the record is vital, debate is essential, and the Commission must always do what is necessary to prevent 9-1-1 outages from happening again.

The Bureau's derecho report also found that multiple jurisdictions did not receive adequate notice of 9-1-1 service disruptions during and after the storm.

The NPRM proposes changes to the Commission's current outage-reporting rules to clarify service providers' responsibility to notify 9-1-1 call centers of communications outages.

Proposed language adds specificity to this notification requirement to ensure that 9-1-1 call centers receive timely and actionable notice of outages affecting 9-1-1 service, minimizing any disruption to emergency response.

This Commission action will have greatest immediate effect on entities that currently route and deliver 9-1-1 calls to call centers.

The NPRM also recognizes the transition to more IP-based and wireless networks and seeks comment on a range of entities likely to provide 9-1-1 services in the future.

In particular, the NPRM supports transition to NG9-1-1 while ensuring that 9-1-1 service providers are held to high standards of reliability, both now and in the future.

Today's action continues our work to tackle these and other 9-1-1-related issues.

For example, in the last two years we initiated text-to-911 on mobile phones, launched wireless emergency alerts to allow local authorities to send text to citizens in emergencies, and are improving location accuracy for mobile 9-1-1 so emergency personnel can more quickly locate people in need.

I want to thank the Public Safety Bureau for their work on this item, and all they've been doing the past few years to ensure that 9-1-1 and our communications networks are there for the American people when they need them most.