STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL

Re: *Improving the Resiliency of Mobile Communications Networks; Reliability and
Continuity of Communications Networks, Including Broadband Technologies*, PS Docket
13-239, PS Docket No. 11-60, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 13-125 (September
26, 2013)

Last year, Hurricane Sandy ripped apart the East Coast. Our cities saw floods, coastal
areas saw fires, and some communities were even waylaid by snow. Power outages were
widespread. Across the affected areas, one quarter of our wireless towers failed. At the moment
that so many of us needed to reach out, one of our major means of communications did not work.

Earlier this month, rain pounded on the parched ground in Colorado. By the time it
stopped, hundreds of road miles were washed out. Entire towns resembled lakes. At one point,
1200 people were not accounted for—lost to family and friends. Local officials cited wireless
network outages as a significant hurdle as they sought to locate survivors.

Just last week in New Jersey, a fiber-optic cable cut disrupted wireless service in towns
near the shore. Homeowners without traditional landlines found themselves unable to make
calls, conduct business, and reach out to neighbors.

In all of these events, we are grateful that carriers sought to fix what failed and get
service up and running as soon as possible. But in disasters, days, minutes, and seconds count.
While we can never make networks failproof, we should take smart steps to make sure that they
are resilient.

The object lessons from Hurricane Sandy, Colorado, and New Jersey that I just recounted
are unlikely to be the only episodes where essential communications get cut in crisis. But I think
we have had enough examples to know that we need an honest conversation about network
resiliency in the digital age. As more consumers migrate from traditional landline services to
new wireless and IP services, they benefit from the new functionalities they can provide. But
unlike the landline phones plugged into the wall, these new services are dependent on
commercial power. This means two things. *First*, we must ask hard questions about back-up
power, and how to make sure our new networks are more dependable when we need them most.
Second, we need to make sure that consumers understand not just the benefits, but also the
limitations, of new technologies when they reach out for assistance. Preparing for the
unthinkable with extra batteries and solar-powered chargers when the plugs in the wall do not
work is not just prudent—it is necessary.

While today's rulemaking does not proceed neatly on these lines, I believe it is essential
to continue the conversation. Because making sure our networks work in disaster and can
withstand mother nature's wrath will make us all stronger—and more safe.