

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN THOMAS E. WHEELER
DECEMBER 12, 2013**

Re: *Technology Transition Task Force Presentation*

As network services are transformed from 19th century analog technology to 21st century IP technology, the question we must answer is how to ensure that the values that consumers have come to expect from their networks are preserved and enhanced. To help us begin to answer that question, the Technology Transition Task Force presentation today is the first look at what they will be bringing back for action at next month's Commission meeting.

The Task Force presentation today reflects a great start. We have learned a tremendous amount already. We have moved from talking about the Transition to a plan for dealing with it.

But it is only a start. The plan leads to challenging questions. There is much more work to do.

I've said often that we have the privilege of grappling with the issues that arise as we transition from 19th century analog technology to 21st century IP technology.

Of course, the transitions are already underway. Building IP-based networks has been refined over the years, so we don't really need "technology" experiments. What we do need are technology impact experiments, because the technology transitions will ultimately move up a notch. Today, for example, IP is an ancillary capability while TDM remains universally available; tomorrow, IP will be the delivery technology.

These experiments are therefore designed to identify in advance issues that must be resolved – and their solutions – so that consumers can continue to rely on the networks that connect them.

The Task Force is preparing an Order that will invite and seek comment on a diverse set of experiments designed to gather data about the impact of these transitions on consumers and businesses.

The key will be establishing the right criteria and conditions for any experiment. What conditions must be met before the Commission could approve an experiment? What are the questions we would ask about how an experiment should be run or measured? We look forward to engagement by multiple parties on these key issues.

The process will provide for prompt submission of proposals and clear timeframes for seeking comment, Commission review and action. People thinking of experiments and those that want to comment on them should be prepared to move quickly. There is no time for any of us to waste.

And we will do more to continue to learn.

Today's MOU with the National Institute on Aging ("NIA") is a great example. Ensuring that people with disabilities continue to have the ability to communicate with others as the network evolves reflects a core value of the Communications Act and the Network Compact. This MOU establishes a relationship between the FCC and NIA which will allow the agencies to develop research plans to assess technologies to improve Telecommunications Relay Service and assess other relay technologies' effectiveness, efficiency, and user satisfaction. We constantly discuss fact-based decision-making; this MOU will help us receive the kind of facts we need.