

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN THOMAS E. WHEELER**

Re: *Wireless E911 Location Accuracy Requirements*, PS Docket No. 07-114

One of the Commission's most important responsibilities is to preserve certain core values even as technology advances and the way that consumers use that technology evolves. Nowhere is that imperative more clear than in the arena of public safety.

Our E911 location accuracy rules were written when wireless phones were a secondary means of communication, and were mostly used outside. Today, more and more consumers use wireless phones as their primary means of communication, and more and more 911 calls are coming from wireless phones, from indoors.

The numbers make this trend very plain, but the stories really bring the issue home. Earlier this week, I met with folks from local PSAPs who told me their stories about why this is so important. They talked about how, during the Navy Yard shootings, people were calling 911 from inside the building – not using their office phones; using their mobile phones. Another story involved a person whose iPad had been stolen – the location information delivered to the PSAP was off by almost 3 miles, but the information provided using the iPad's location app provided pinpoint accuracy.

Our rules need to reflect the new realities of the always-connected mobile world. A lot of good work already has been done on this issue. In particular, through the CSRIC, FCC staff worked with wireless providers and technology vendors to establish a test bed to determine the state of location technology. What we learned has given us confidence that further advances in technology should enable us to locate callers indoors with the same degree of accuracy as outdoors. The Notice we adopt today builds on that experience by proposing an accuracy threshold for indoor locations that is just as effective as the threshold for outdoor locations, and an aggressive but reachable timeline for achieving that threshold.

Another important development is the ability to find a caller on the so-called "Z-axis" – that is, not just knowing what building the caller is in, but also what floor. This technology is relatively new, but it's already being installed in many handsets for commercial services. The proposals we adopt today seek to leverage that innovation to make sure that information is available to public safety.

Of course, as the saying goes, it takes two to tango. Providers will deliver the information, but it will mean little if PSAPs and state and local governments do not take the necessary steps on their part. This item asks important questions about what steps the FCC can take to encourage PSAPs to continue moving forward, but state and local governments must also step up to ensure that PSAPs have sufficient funding to deploy the necessary technologies and, ultimately, make the migration to NG911.

The item also proposes changes to our rules to address some of the challenges and issues raised by the data that was submitted to the FCC last year by the California chapter of the National Emergency Number Association.

Finally, this item also asks some very important questions about the opportunities new technologies enable in the longer term. Technologies that already exist and are already widely deployed should be able to provide granular location information. For example, can we leverage Wi-Fi or other small cell technologies to locate not just the building a caller is in, but the room? Today, for instance, stores in the mall know when you enter because they bounce a Wi-Fi signal off your mobile handset.

Our job is to ensure that as network providers and their customers upgrade to new technologies, there is no downgrade in reliability, availability, or public safety. Today's item takes the next steps to ensure that our rules continue to evolve along with technology and changing consumer habits.

Thank you to everyone in the Public Safety Bureau for their work on this item.