

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN**

Re: *Facilitating the Deployment of Text-to-911 and Other Next Generation 911 Applications*, PS Docket No. 11-153; *Framework for Next Generation 911 Deployment*, PS Docket No. 10-255

Helen Keller once said, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” When you step away from all of the technical details this item is simply about relevant stakeholders putting that principle into action. The ability to send messages, photos, and video clips, as well as other innovations in broadband technologies, can improve 9-1-1 communications for all Americans. Text messaging plays a vital role in protecting life and property when making a voice call is either dangerous or impossible due to transmission problems. This technology enables the more than 40 million people in the U.S. with hearing and speech disabilities to use their mobile phones to effectively access emergency services. Without text-to-911, they may possess the ability to place a call; but remain unable to express what type of help they need.

This is why the Commission has been trying, for several years now, to promote the deployment of text-to-911 and other Next Generation technologies. The reality is that the wireless industry and public safety agencies have found it difficult to deploy these advanced communications services. The first substantial breakthrough occurred, however, in December of 2012 thanks to industry collaboration. The four nationwide wireless carriers agreed to deploy text-to-911, on a nationwide basis, by May 15, 2014. That agreement helped accelerate progress to more than 90 percent of the nation’s wireless consumers. The wider availability of these services is also spurring Public Safety Answering Points, or PSAPs, to upgrade their networks so they can accept text to 911 messages. It is great to see entities, like Intrado and TeleCommunication Systems, work closely to help PSAPs deploy more text-to-911 services.

We build on the momentum from that 2012 voluntary commitment with this item. The Order makes clear that text-to-911 benefits should extend to consumers of all CMRS providers as well as those of certain interconnected Over-the-Top text messaging services. We are able to take this significant action thanks to the fact that several companies are currently sending text messages, using SMS-based protocols, routed over the underlying carriers’ SMS network. In the Further Notice released in January of this year, we expressly sought comment on the technical details of the various approaches Over the Top service messages can use to send text messages. Several companies offering this service supported the technology neutral approach that the Commission adopts today. They also asserted that it is technically feasible to set December 31, 2014 as the deadline, for Over the Top message services to comply with the text-to-911 mandate.

I am also pleased to see that the Commission also establishes a centralized database through which PSAPs may register as “text-ready” and notify all relevant covered text providers of their ability to accept texts. This approach can help facilitate wider deployment of text to 911 networks.

The Further Notice asks important questions about promoting the delivery of these messages through more advanced technologies. It seeks comment on a proposal to require enhanced location accuracy information when a 911 text message is delivered. It also asks technical questions about delivering these messages over Wi-Fi only networks and telematics services.

When I left the building at 6:30 PM last evening, I was prepared to enthusiastically support this item. This morning I arrived to the office to learn of an eleventh hour proposal that would direct the Communications Security, Reliability, and Interoperability Council, or CSRIC, to form a task force that would inquire into a number of issues. I agree that it is appropriate to form a Task Force and to examine the structure and architecture of our nation’s PSAPs and-determine whether there are ways that PSAPs could promote efficiency of operations, safety of life, and cost containment. I must dissent, however, from the proposal that came to my attention less than two hours ago, that the Task Force inquire into

whether states, Tribal, and local entities that divert E911 funds should be ineligible to participate on various FCC councils, committees, and working groups. Doing so unnecessarily prejudices the issue and creates avoidable friction with our state partners that I worked for years, as the former Joint Board Chair, to improve.

I commend those parties, who have been working constructively with the Commission staff, and relevant stakeholders over the years. Your collaboration is vital to a successful transition to Next Generation 911 technologies. I also wish to thank Admiral Simpson, David Furth, Nicole McGinnis, Tim May and the other members of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, for working so diligently, on this item. Happy anniversary, Mr. Siehl. What a fine way to celebrate your milestone of serving 30 years at the Commission.