

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL O'RIELLY**

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

Over the past few months, I have been fortunate to visit several Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs). From New York City, to Fairfax County, Virginia, to Anchorage, Alaska, dedicated and hardworking 911 call takers have expressed the great need for better location information. The location of the caller can be the single most critical data point taken during each emergency call, as demonstrated by the fact that the first thing some call centers ask is “where is your emergency?” not “what is your emergency?” For this reason, I support today’s item that will facilitate the ability of 911 call takers to access quicker and more accurate location information for wireless callers that contact 911 during emergencies, especially when they are indoors. This is a particular concern as it pertains to more densely populated locations, including urban centers with skyscrapers and high-rises.

In the February 2014 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (Notice), the Commission challenged the wireless sector and public safety community to develop a “consensus approach” to improve indoor location accuracy.¹ I applaud the wireless industry, NENA and APCO for stepping up to the plate and putting forth a “roadmap” to deliver “dispatchable location,” the so-called gold standard of emergency location information, sooner than expected. By providing the address, along with other information such as floor, apartment or suite, emergency services will be able to locate the person in need and administer assistance faster than ever before, when seconds count.

By setting a goal to provide dispatchable location to first responders within specified timeframes and with specific performance results, however, we are tasking industry with a quite a challenge. In response to the 2014 Notice, I cautioned that deadlines needed to be realistic and that we should not adopt rules based on unproven technologies that have not been commercially deployed. Within the modified roadmap confines, industry and public safety are prepared to take on this challenge, along with testing alternative technologies if dispatchable address cannot be timely deployed. In fact, I am able to support today’s item because we are adopting a compromise that addresses many of the concerns raised on this issue. I am sure that everyone – including my colleagues and stakeholders alike – can look at what is being adopted today and see particular portions that they would have done differently, but this is a consensus document receiving all of my colleagues’ support and it skillfully balances all of the competing interests.

Ultimately, this item should serve to bring tremendous benefits forward for all concerned. The public safety community will receive more precise information, in the desired format, to increase efficiency and rapidly respond to emergencies. Industry has a path forward that will likely be achievable in the timeframes provided. Moreover, companies will not be faced with a single vendor solution or possibly forced to build out multiple indoor location solutions, wasting money and stranding investment. And, the real winners, of course, are American consumers, who, in time, will be more locatable by first responders when placing a wireless call.

Today, the Commission is successfully implementing a voluntary industry and public sector compromise, albeit after several rounds of revisions. And, the plan put forth will hopefully reduce the need for future action and waivers down the road, as experienced during the previous location accuracy proceeding.

¹ *Wireless E911 Location Accuracy Requirements*, PS Docket No. 07-114, *Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, 29 FCC Rcd 2374 (2014).

Separately, I renew my concern that the location information resulting from the implementation of this item could be used by government agencies to pinpoint the location of law abiding Americans. While this is not the direct responsibility of the Commission, I trust that appropriate oversight, including congressional involvement, will seek to ensure that this information is not used or abused to the detriment of the American people. Improving location accuracy for wireless 911 callers should not happen at the expense of greater exposure to surveillance or monitoring by government officials. It is to help public safety during emergencies, not limit the freedoms and lawful activities of American citizens.

I thank the Chairman and my fellow Commissioners for agreeing to this approach, and I thank the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau for their hard work on this item.