

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: Ensuring Continuity of 911 Communications, PS Docket No. 14-174, Report and Order

Two-hundred and forty million 911 calls are placed each year. If you've never had to dial this number, consider yourself lucky. But one day when the unthinkable occurs, you just might. And before any police radio crackles, fire engine blares, or ambulance races—you will need to reach a 911 operator. That is one call you need to go through.

In the past, 911 calls reached our nation's emergency call centers through traditional copper telephone lines. Because copper lines are served by an independent electrical source, they work—even when commercial power systems fail.

But today, the ways we reach out in emergency are more diverse than ever before. Calls to 911 come tumbling in from a variety of communications technologies. We have wired and wireless services, voice calls and texts. Our networks are evolving. And one of the biggest changes taking place entails consumers swapping out old copper lines for new IP services—services that are dependent on commercial power.

There is a lot to gain from this evolution of technology and explosion of IP services. But we need to be mindful that these new IP services require planning for when the electricity goes out. Because in the course of all this network change we cannot sacrifice our most basic values. Public safety matters—and when you call 911 that call needs to go through—no matter the time, place, or technology you use to place your call. That is why I support what we do here today.

This Report and Order makes clear that service providers must offer backup power to their customers so that they can maintain service when the lights go dark and commercial power fails. It also requires providers to educate consumers by providing meaningful information about backup power offerings.

This is progress, because it promotes both public safety and the evolution of network infrastructure. But going forward, vigilance is required—in three areas. First, we need to ensure that consumers understand their new networks so that they prepare for outages. Second, we need to watch marketplace developments so that basic safety needs are not compromised by unjustifiable new fees. Third, we need to support the development of systems with longer back-up capabilities—and over time find ways to expand their availability in our most vulnerable places.

Thank you to the dedicated staff of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau for this Report and Order—and for their unwavering commitment to improving the reliability of 911.