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For Immediate Release

**COMPANIES FINED \$1.4 MILLION FOR FAILING TO ACCEPT 911
CALLS FOR AMERICANS WHO ARE HARD OF HEARING**
Hamilton, InnoCaption, & Sprint Admit Failing to Properly Handle IP CTS 911 Calls

WASHINGTON, September 24, 2015 – The Federal Communications Commission’s Enforcement Bureau today reached settlements totaling \$1.4 million with Hamilton Relay, InnoCaption, and Sprint Corp., resolving investigations into the companies’ inability to handle 911 calls through applications used by callers who are hard of hearing. Over periods varying from 5 weeks to approximately 10 months, the companies were not only unable to relay 911 calls from Americans who are hard of hearing but were unaware of this issue until a Commission investigation revealed the problem.

“All Americans must be able to reach 911 in an emergency,” said Travis LeBlanc, Chief of the Enforcement Bureau. “Today’s settlements reaffirm our commitment to ensure that the hard of hearing community has essential 911 service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Not only are we fining these companies for failing to provide this vital services, but we are assuring that they provide it going forward.”

Individuals who can use their own voice but have difficulty hearing utilize a Telephone Relay Service (TRS) called Internet Protocol Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS) to engage in a telephone conversation using an Internet Protocol-enabled device that allows callers to simultaneously listen while reading captions of what the other party is saying. Companies that provide IP CTS do not charge consumers for the service, but are instead eligible to receive compensation from the federally-mandated TRS Fund as long as they have complied with the FCC’s TRS Rules and orders.

The FCC’s Enforcement Bureau and Consumer and Government Affairs Bureau discovered, through test calls made in 2014, that the companies were not able to accept and handle 911 emergency calls made using IP CTS applications, as required by Commission rules governing TRS. The Enforcement Bureau’s investigation showed that the amount of time the companies were out of compliance varied. The Bureau also found that the companies submitted inaccurate requests to the TRS Fund administrator for compensation provided to users of IP CTS applications during the period the companies were not in compliance with the emergency call handling rules.

As part of the settlement, the companies have admitted that their actions violated Commission rules and have agreed to adopt robust compliance plans. The plans all contain measures to ensure that Hamilton, InnoCaption, and Sprint all adhere to the FCC’s emergency call handling

requirements for IP CTS providers, inform and educate consumers on emergency calling, and strengthen policies and procedures for detection and notification of 911 call handling issues. In addition, the settlements require each company to develop and implement risk management processes to:

- Identify risks that could result in 911 call failures;
- Protect against such risks;
- Detect future 911 call failures;
- Respond to such failures with remedial actions, including notification to consumers; and
- Recover from such failures on a timely basis.

Hamilton, InnoCaption, and Sprint also each agree to waive all rights and claims to reimbursements from the TRS Fund associated with IP CTS applications during the time that 911 calls could not be handled. To resolve the investigations, Sprint will pay \$1,175,000, Hamilton will pay \$235,000, and InnoCaption will pay \$25,000, and each company will file detailed compliance reports with the Enforcement Bureau.

Today's settlements are the first enforcement actions against TRS providers involving the emergency call handling requirements. Users of TRS who experience problems with making an emergency call, or the handling of an emergency call by their TRS provider, can file a complaint with the FCC online at <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov/hc/en-us>, or by contacting the FCC's Consumer Center at 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice or 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY; faxing 1-866-418-0232; or by writing to:

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

The Hamilton Consent Decree is available at: https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-15-1043A1.pdf

The InnoCaption Consent Decree is available at: https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-15-1045A1.pdf

The Sprint Consent Decree is available at: https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-15-1040A1.pdf

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).