



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE
CHAIRWOMAN

July 11, 2022

The Honorable Tom O'Halleran
U.S. House of Representatives
318 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative O'Halleran:

Thank you for your June 13, 2022, letter regarding reports of repeated network outages in northern and eastern Arizona in areas served by Frontier Communications Corporation. You asked that the Federal Communications Commission investigate such outages and specifically the outage that occurred on June 10, 2022. I have reviewed your letter and other reports concerning this outage and have directed the Enforcement Bureau to investigate.

As you note, the June 10 outage not only compromised cellular, landline, and internet communications, it also affected 911 calls. 911 is vital to every community—and these kinds of outages can have outsized consequences during the public health crisis caused by COVID-19. I am committed to a full and thorough investigation to learn all the facts surrounding this outage as well as efforts to resolve it. However, to maintain the integrity of the investigation, the Commission's practice is not to comment further until the investigation has concluded. If our Enforcement Bureau determines that there was a violation of agency rules and law, I intend to take swift action.

In the meantime, the Commission is working to promote industry-wide action to improve its ability to understand and identify the causes of 911 outages and hold those responsible accountable. To this end, last year the Commission proposed updated rules to standardize the information that carriers share with 911 call centers to ensure 911 call centers have actionable and timely information regarding the status of their service. Providing this information in a consistent and convenient way will help with service restoration, improve public safety, and provide more opportunity to assess problems that lead to outages so that we can help prevent them in the future. When carriers fail to follow the FCC's outage reporting rules, the agency takes enforcement action, which may include substantial monetary penalties as well as compliance plans that may require improved internal 911 processes, network design changes, reviews of redundant 911 circuits, improved testing, and increased oversight over subcontractors providing 911 services.

Finally, I note that our emergency calling systems are in need of a nationwide upgrade to Next Generation 911. NG911 systems will improve public safety by providing new ways of interacting with emergency services and increasing the resiliency of our 911 network. In order to ensure that these improvements reach call centers across the country, a national effort is required. That is why earlier this year, I offered a plan to use the funds raised from public spectrum auctions at the Commission to support a nationwide upgrade to NG911. I would welcome the opportunity to follow up with your office on this effort.

I hope this is helpful. Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jessica Rosenworcel", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jessica Rosenworcel