STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER KEVIN J. MARTIN

Re: New Part 4 of the Commission's Rules Concerning Disruptions to Communications, *Notice of Proposed Rule Making ET Docket No. 04-35*

I am pleased to support this item, which explores updating our network outage reporting requirements. One of this Commission's most important responsibilities is to seek to "make available, so far as possible" a nationwide and worldwide wire and radio communication service "for the purpose of the national defense" and "for the purpose of promoting safety of life and property." 47 U.S.C. § 151. After massive telephone outages on the east and west coasts occurred in 1991, a congressional investigation questioned the extent to which the Commission was fulfilling this responsibility. The Commission responded by establishing a counsel – today known as the Network Reliability and Interoperability Council or NRIC – and implementing network outage reporting requirements for telephone companies and cable companies providing common carrier services. These steps have proven effective. NRIC has used the information gathered from our reporting requirements to develop best practices to reduce the severity and number of telecommunications outages. This information has also enabled the FCC to determine whether and how network reliability is improving.

However, the world has changed a great deal from the early 1990s. Since then, wireless and satellite communications – which are not covered by our reporting requirements – have become ubiquitous. Moreover, these communications are now the first choice of many (including Government and public safety officials) for use in emergencies. It is thus crucial that we ensure the reliability of these communications. As the Commission found with respect to wireline communications, an important part of this task is obtaining network outage information. Accordingly, I look forward to receiving comments on the best way the Commission can obtain information on all components of our telecommunications infrastructure and ensure continued communications reliability in the 21st century.