

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JONATHAN S. ADELSTEIN**

Re: Implementing a Nationwide, Broadband, Interoperable Public Safety Network in the 700 MHz Band; Development of Operational, Technical and Spectrum Requirements for Meeting Federal, State and Local Public Safety Communications Requirements Through the Year 2010, Ninth Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, (PS Docket No. 06-229, WT Docket No. 96-86).

I am very pleased to support this Notice of Proposed Rulemaking because it represents a creative approach to an interoperability problem that has long plagued our nation's public safety community. As we become fully immersed in the digital broadband world, it is critical that our first responders have access to the same first-rate communications systems that many consumers already enjoy. Our proposal today puts us closer to that goal than we have come in a long time.

True interoperability has been an elusive goal for the public safety community. Despite our best efforts, the Commission's policies to date have not provided the results we had hoped. While we have seen recent efforts to create certain state-wide and metropolitan area networks, most public safety communications systems remain localized, and interoperability between local, state, and federal agencies is limited. Our item today leapfrogs these previous interoperability efforts and focuses attention on our ability to leverage the licensing process to create a real incentive for nationwide interoperability through a careful balance of flexibility and conditions.

This "carrot and stick" approach is consistent with a view of spectrum policy that I have long advocated. I believe that the Commission has a responsibility to be more resourceful in its approach to spectrum policy and to take a more active role in being on the leading edge of spectrum technology. I have called for the Commission to consider policies that promote flexibility and innovation. Since the spectrum is a finite public resource, we need to see results as well – particularly in the area of wireless broadband, whether for public safety or commercial purposes. I am pleased that this item follows many of these same principles.

Finally, while I wholeheartedly support the launch of this proceeding today, I do want to counsel for taking a cautious and deliberate approach to an ultimate resolution. It is important to acknowledge that our proposal today talks in very broad strokes and looks to commenters to fill in many important details and specifics. A Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making that details a more specific and complete proposal may be needed in order to make sure that we really get this proceeding right. Our item today puts the Commission in a place that it does not routinely occupy. If we decide to go forward with a national broadband public safety licensee, we need to get the specifics nailed down as clearly as possible. We may only have one real bite at this apple, and for the sake of public safety, we want it to be a good one.