

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER DEBORAH TAYLOR TATE**

Re: Recommendation of the Independent Panel Reviewing the Impact of Hurricane Katrina on Communications Networks, EB Docket No. 06-119

When disaster strikes, our first reaction is to reach out to those we love. We call for help, we call loved ones to tell them we are okay, and we call to offer assistance to those in need. The Commission plays a critical role in ensuring the continuity of essential communications systems that are relied on for public safety, for public officials, for relief efforts, and for every single citizen touched by a disaster. The FCC is filled with engineers, economists, and attorneys with an intimate knowledge of the communications industry. These people are also parents and caring human beings who want to help in times of great need. This collective experience is a valuable resource for everyone involved in a disaster response, including first responders, state and local government, other federal agencies, and of course, the public. That is why I am pleased to support today's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (Notice) because the comments we receive will be invaluable to the Commission, to the industries we regulate, and to the American people.

Certainly, we all owe Nancy Victory a sincere debt of gratitude for her leadership of the independent panel reviewing the impact of Hurricane Katrina. To those members of the panel who suffered great personal loss, we particularly thank you for your efforts and continue our prayers for recovery and renewal.

I encourage the industry to continue to develop and share their own thoughts, strategies, and ideas on disaster preparedness and emergency system interoperability in response to this Notice. The industry has already developed some extraordinary disaster recovery plans, and I have been able to see emergency response equipment set up by several companies, including AT&T's Disaster Recovery equipment. In addition, I hope that we can learn lessons from all types of businesses – from Home Depot to Wal-Mart and beyond – about how to better prepare and react to a crisis.

I would also hope we recognize that not all disasters come in the form of hurricanes. The threat of bioterrorism or a pandemic flu will strain our resources in ways entirely different from wind and rain. We must not simply react to past disasters, but look ahead to future threats and be prepared to do our part to ensure the safety and security of all Americans.