

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER ROBERT M. MCDOWELL**

Re: *Recommendations of the Independent Panel Reviewing the Impact of Hurricane Katrina on Communications Networks* (EB Docket No. 06-119)

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the FCC worked around the clock to bring much needed help and to make available funds to help restore communications and provide a lifeline for thousands of Americans. Under the leadership of Chairman Martin, the FCC was a model of swift governmental response and support in time of need.

The job of the Independent Panel was to study the effect of Hurricane Katrina on all sectors of the telecommunications and media industries, to review and critique the recovery effort with respect to the communications infrastructure, and to present their findings and recommendations on improving disaster preparedness, network reliability, and communications among first responders. I applaud the Chairman for his leadership in the FCC's response to Hurricane Katrina and in establishing this panel, and I thank Nancy Victory and the members of the panel for their hard work.

The lessons learned from the Katrina experience will allow us to be better prepared, not just in the Gulf Coast region or in the event of a hurricane, but in the face of any impending disaster to provide the critical infrastructure and interoperability of communications systems so vital to protecting lives and property. As we seek comment on how best to act on the recommendations of the Independent Panel and put these measures in place, I urge everyone to weigh in on this important issue. The power of every American to serve the public good has never been stronger, the need to act as one community to defend against the threat of harm has never been more urgent, and the opportunity to come together to make a difference has never been greater than now.