STATEMENT OF
FCC COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN

Re: *Notice of Inquiry in the Matter of Reliability and Continuity of Communications Networks, Including Broadband Technologies (PS Docket No. 11-60; FCC 11-55).*

It is almost impossible these days to turn on the television, listen to the radio, or surf the Internet, without hearing news about the heartbreaking situation in Japan. While we all continue to pray for a speedy recovery for that Nation, it is important to note that the devastation could have been even worse without the country's advanced communications capabilities. Reports indicate that numerous lives were saved through television and cell phone alerts, issued by Japan's emergency warning system, which afforded citizens time to prepare. The Internet also played a key role, allowing many to communicate with families and friends via Twitter, Facebook, and Skype.

This unfortunate event underscores the need for examining the continuity and reliability of communications networks here in the United States. It is imperative that, during large-scale disasters, citizens are able to obtain vital information from public safety officials and communicate with loved ones.

Our Nation's own experiences, in the aftermath of disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, and violent storms like the one which struck my parent's neighborhood in South Carolina this week, highlight the importance of having our networks protected from potential failures. The NOI asks important questions about critical features in preventing the outages such as the need for backup power, and backhaul redundancy.

I am also pleased to see that the NOI engages in a comprehensive inquiry on the continuity and reliability of our broadband networks. Critical sectors such as public safety, energy, and finance, are migrating from older, legacy, technologies to broadband. Consumers of communications services at all levels may not know much about the technological platform used to deliver their communications services. But these consumers expect the same level of quality and reliability regardless of the platform. We must take steps now to see whether these IP based networks have the high carrier grade standards of legacy systems.

In my opinion, the best way to address these issues is to gather input from the widest possible array of stakeholders. Such collaboration allows us to fashion solutions that achieve important policy initiatives without imposing unreasonable burdens on any communications companies. It is possible the industry leadership has developed high quality standards that are necessary to address reliability concerns, for legacy and broadband networks. This proceeding will help shed light on best practices and allow the Commission to take a proper approach to encourage adoption of those standards.

I look forward to reviewing recommendations on ways to ensure continual, reliable service on all communications networks during major emergencies. In addition, I commend the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, for its excellent work and leadership on this important issue.