

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: *Service Rules for the 698-746, 747-762 and 777-792 MHz Bands*, WT Docket No. 06-150, *Implementing a Nationwide, Broadband, Interoperable Public Safety Network in the 700 MHz Band*, PS Docket No. 06-229, *Amendment of Part 90 of the Commission's Rules*, WP Docket No. 07-100, *Third Report and Order and Fourth Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*.

The Commission has a long list of challenges it needs to tackle, but the safety of the American people must always be at the top of that list. We are fast approaching the ten-year anniversary of 9/11. *The 9/11 Commission Report*—which I encourage everyone to read and read again—lays out in chilling detail a lack of communications readiness that seriously hampered our country's ability to respond on that terrible day. More should have been done immediately after 9/11 to address the needs of public safety. I called for it then, but little action was taken. Quite frankly, it is inexcusable that we still do not have a nationwide interoperable public safety network.

Every public safety organization should have access to a reliable system that they can use *anywhere*, to talk to *any* other first responder, in *any* emergency. Today's action gets us closer to that goal. We provide a clear framework to guide the development and deployment of a nationwide public safety broadband network in the 700 MHz public safety spectrum. When we granted waivers last year to allow a number of jurisdictions to move forward with deployment of public safety networks, we imposed an initial set of technical requirements aimed at ensuring that any network deployed could be integrated into and be interoperable with a nationwide network. We must avoid the balkanization of new public safety broadband networks, and ensure that all public safety organizations—those in jurisdictions with the money to start deployment today and those that cannot yet make such an investment—will be able to communicate with themselves and each other.

By adopting today a common technology platform, Long Term Evolution (LTE), we are hopeful that public safety organizations will be able to reap the benefits of the economies of scale and the continuing innovation in standards development resulting from ongoing private sector investment in the 700 MHz band. Better promoting the safety and protection of the American people today means, in large measure, realizing the potential of new and evolving technologies. We also propose further technical rules to support interoperability, public safety-to-public safety roaming, and use of the 700 MHz band by Federal government public safety entities.

Title I of our enabling statute gives us clear responsibility to ensure the safety of the American people through communications networks. Today we take just such an action—moving us closer to creating a much needed, nationally connected, interoperable broadband network for public safety. I commend Admiral Barnett and the amazing team in the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau for the hard work they did on this item and for the work they do each day to ensure first responders have access to the communications tools they need to protect American lives and property.