

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN TOM WHEELER**

Re: Ensuring Continuity of 911 Communications, PS Docket No. 14-174, Report and Order

When we talk about core values that must be preserved as we transition to next-generation fiber- and Internet Protocol (IP)-based networks, public safety is at the top of the list. Today, we're taking action to expand the availability of back-up power and make sure consumers will reliably be able to reach 911 during emergencies in an IP world.

Public safety offers a vivid example of how the network technology transitions are concurrently creating both new opportunities and new challenges. For example, IP-based networks enable 911 call centers to receive a greater range of information – such as text and video – so they can better support first responders in an emergency.

However, these innovative voice services are more vulnerable to outages during emergencies than their copper predecessors. While traditional, copper-based landline home phone service typically works during electric outages because they carry their own power, new services, often delivered over fiber or using IP-based technologies, usually require an independent source of power. This means they need backup power to keep operating in the event of a power outage.

Today we take action to see that consumers are informed about the need for back-up power when using these voice services, and can get such backup power, should they so choose.

The new rules will require providers to offer consumers the option to buy backup power so they can use their phones during power outages. These providers would be required to ensure that a technical solution for 8 hours of standby backup power is available for consumers to purchase, either directly or from a third-party retailer, at the point of sale. And, within three years, providers will also be required to offer an option for 24 hours of standby backup power.

A safe consumer begins with an informed consumer. That's why the rules will also require providers to inform both current and new customers about service limitations during electric outages and the steps they can take to address those risks through backup power, including how to keep their service operational during a multi-day power outage.

With this item, the Commission is empowering consumers to make informed choices and support their need for 911 service during emergencies. We are helping to maximize the benefits of new networks for public safety, while minimizing the challenges.