

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN TOM WHEELER**

Re: *Wireless E911 Location Accuracy Requirements*, PS Docket No. 07-114.

Since I arrived at the Commission, one of our top public safety priorities has been improving the effectiveness of 911. Last February, we adopted an NPRM that proposed aggressive but achievable goals for improved location accuracy. Through the hard, diligent work of many people at the FCC, in the public safety community, and in industry, we have before us today an Order that significantly improves our 911 location accuracy rules.

Everybody agrees on the problem: When the FCC adopted its original wireless 911 rules in 1996, most wireless usage occurred outdoors. But times and technology have changed. The vast majority of 911 calls now come from wireless phones, increasingly from indoors.

This has generated a 911 readiness gap. First responders are less able to rapidly and accurately locate a significant percentage of calls for help than they could in previous years.

We need to update our wireless 911 rules to solve this problem. The record that was developed in response to our proposals tells us that there have been significant advances in technology, including technologies that have the potential to locate indoor callers by address, floor, and apartment or room number. We all know how commercial location-based services like Uber can find their users reliably and consistently. If we can have an app that gets a car service to the right door, we certainly should be able to get 911 to the right door consistently and reliably. It is a simple public interest obligation.

Late last year, the four largest wireless carriers and two national public safety organizations submitted their own proposed “roadmap” to address this challenge. The roadmap was a novel approach that has the potential to close the readiness gap through use of known locations of indoor wireless nodes.

The roadmap proposal was a big step forward, but we also understand and appreciate the valid criticisms raised by some public safety stakeholders. Our response was to challenge industry to address the concerns raised by other public safety stakeholders. The carriers responded, and their additional commitments substantially strengthened the roadmap approach. We will have better data than ever before about carriers’ location accuracy performance, and we will hold them to account if they do not live up to their commitments. In addition, the smaller wireless carriers have agreed to the same commitments as the nationwide carriers, with certain adjustments to reflect their position in the marketplace and their more limited resources.

The result of these efforts is today’s Order. It is an action that will lead to significant improvements in 911 location accuracy: taking advantage of the good work done by the carriers, APCO, and NENA, while also providing confidence-building measures, setting clear targets and deadlines for improving indoor location, and holding parties accountable for results. This order establishes achievable benchmarks centered around the commitments made by the carriers and public safety assurances that will close the 911 readiness gap. That is why I support it.

But let there be no mistake – we are establishing a floor, not a ceiling. It is a beginning, not an end. We should not be satisfied with a situation where Uber can consistently find a user’s house via an app, but the EMT’s location fix is within half a football field 80 percent of the time. I hope our efforts will encourage app developers to work with the public safety community to develop an “Uber for 911.” Imagine – the carriers would be improving their capabilities, while “there’s an app for that” could harness the capabilities that enable Google, Uber, or Waze to find a consumer with pinpoint accuracy.

Together we can and will deliver on the promise of new technology to make Americans safer.