

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

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

Fairfax Center Fire Station 40 is a showcase firehouse for the county in suburban Virginia. The immaculately-maintained facilities house Fairfax's primary hazmat response team and a continuing education center for first responders. Equally celebrated is the firehouse's 100-gallon fish tank, which a shift built using spare parts and pieces ordered online. The fish tank is more than a decoration. As one firefighter told me, it's a way that she and her teammates decompress—a way to relieve the stress of saving lives.

I spent a morning last week with about a dozen firefighters at Station 40 to understand how location technology assists them in their jobs. It was eye-opening. A firefighter who has been at it for decades described what it's like to charge into a burning building. It's chaos. Fire and smoke, adrenaline racing. Sometimes you can't tell what floor you're on. Other times it's no use telling because the floors have collapsed.

Two use cases for height sensors immediately came to the veteran firefighter's mind. He said that knowing the vertical location of a 911 caller could cut search and rescue time. And knowing the height of a lost or unresponsive teammate could save a first responder's life.

What first responders want is actionable information. Sometimes they want to know what door to kick in or what floor to climb to. And so today we require that floor-level information be provided when it's available. We seek to know the state of the science so that as technology can more regularly and accurately identify floors or even units, we can send that data to those trying to save lives.

At other times, though, floor information isn't what's needed. The floor from which the 911 call came won't matter if the floor has collapsed. A floor estimate isn't relevant to rescuing someone stuck on a cliff—an example with which the Fairfax firefighters have first-hand experience in Great Falls Park. And in the heat of the moment, rushing into a burning building, surrounded by smoke, it's easy for a first responder to become disoriented and lose track of exactly what floor she's on. Telling her to go to Floor 9 is less actionable in those cases than telling her that the 911 call originated 20 meters above her current location—and that is information that no PSAP needs to translate or convert before providing it to their fellow first responders.

The true height—or HAE—approach we adopt has promise and is technically feasible today. But I think we all agree that we shouldn't put all of our chips on one particular technology. That's why the further notice presses carriers, handset makers, and software companies to keep working on this data challenge so we can raise the standard as technology evolves. At the same time, we certainly shouldn't put all of our chips on another technology, the makers of which say is not ready for prime time. And that's particularly true when we can foresee that the technology won't work in so many emergency circumstances—for example, when the power is off.

Everyone on this dais supports sending height information to first responders. Everyone wants to press the technologists and inventors to make that data more and more precise. Today's item gives us a choice. Do we send the best height information that's technically possible to first responders now, or do we wait until better height information is available later? The companies that have been lobbying for the FCC to depend on a particular technology—which, to repeat, they say is not ready to be used—previously called on the Commission to hit the pause button on updating our vertical location requirements. I, for one, don't think we should wait. I think we should send the best information now and continue sending better information as the technology improves. And that is the same view that first responders from across the country wrote to the FCC in support of.

So I want to thank the overwhelming majority of the public safety community for its endorsement of this item, and I want to thank the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau for its work. The item has my support.