

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Improving 911 Reliability*, PS Docket No. 13-75; *Amendments to Part 4 of the Commission's Rules Concerning Disruptions to Communications*, PS Docket No. 15-80; *New Part 4 of the Commission's Rules Concerning Disruptions to Communications*, ET Docket No. 04-35, Third Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (April 22, 2021)

Because 911 plays an essential role in protecting Americans, network failures that prevent calls from reaching public safety answering points can prevent lifesaving services from reaching people in need. This is not simply a theoretical issue, and the real-world consequences can be extremely serious. For example, a single five-hour outage in 2017 resulted in the failure of 911 calls from about 12,600 callers. Preventing these failures—which can be catastrophic for people experiencing an emergency—is an important carrier responsibility. When outages do occur, timely notification can help mitigate the harm to callers by allowing PSAPs and other emergency responders to inform the public of alternative ways to contact emergency services.

Today's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking proposes to harmonize the Commission's rules for the timing, means, and frequency of network outage notifications that originating and covered 911 service providers are required to provide PSAPs. The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking also proposes timely and direct consumer notifications of all material information regarding an outage, and it proposes that service providers include alternative means to reach emergency services, at the request of the PSAP. Speeding notification to PSAPs and to impacted customers during a 911 outage can change the outcome of an emergency, and I am pleased to approve this NPRM advancing those efforts. I thank the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau for its hard work on this issue.