

**Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Inquiry Concerning 911 Access, Routing, and	)	PS Docket No. 17-239
Location in Enterprise Communications	)	
Systems	)	

**COMMENTS OF AT&T**

AT&T Services Inc., on behalf of its affiliates (collectively, “AT&T”), submits these comments in response to the Federal Communications Commission’s (“Commission” or “FCC”) Notice of Inquiry on Enterprise Communications Systems (“ECS”) and 911 capabilities.<sup>1</sup> Today’s ECS marketplace is characterized by high levels of competition and innovation. Sophisticated enterprise owners seek tailored, often highly customized solutions to meet the telecommunications needs of the populations served by their ECS, and emergency calling functionalities will vary as a result. In its laudable effort to improve ECS support for 911 calling, the Commission should be mindful to first “do no harm” by not impinging on enterprise owners’ discretion to adopt customized 911 calling solutions that enhance public safety. Enterprise owners are uniquely situated to address many of the issues raised in the NOI, and it is this constituency that must be engaged to address any public safety deficiencies, particularly with respect to its role in dynamically updating location information. Moreover, as it has in the past, the Commission should continue to defer to states’ leading role on ECS emergency calling.

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<sup>1</sup> *Inquiry Concerning 911 Access, Routing, and Location in Enterprise Communications Systems*, Notice of Inquiry, PS Docket No. 17-239, FCC 17-125 (2017) (“NOI”).

States are best positioned to determine the needs and capabilities of enterprise owners, and have clear jurisdiction to direct solutions, if necessary.

**I. SERVICES OFFERED IN THE ECS MARKETPLACE ARE A REFLECTION OF ENTERPRISE CUSTOMER DEMAND.**

AT&T has unique insight into ECS issues because it occupies many roles in the ECS marketplace. AT&T is a provider of multiple circuit-switched and Voice over Internet Protocol (“VoIP”) (both interconnected and non-interconnected) services, an equipment reseller, and a large ECS customer. In these roles, AT&T has found that the ECS marketplace is competitive and innovative, and above all, individualized for customer needs. Sophisticated ECS customers order customized solutions to address their communications needs. The Commission should avoid any action that limits ECS operator discretion to purchase and deploy such customized solutions, especially those that enhance public safety.

Enterprise owners demand advanced solutions that are efficient, flexible, scalable, and tailored to their organization. The Commission correctly notes that ECS networks vary considerably in size and complexity, and that the enterprise owner may be “a building owner/manager, a business, or a non-profit or public institution.”<sup>2</sup> To meet the unique communications needs of the populations using their ECS systems, enterprise owners may purchase services and equipment from multiple vendors, and assemble their own customized enterprise calling solutions. Once deployed, many enterprise owners manage the provisioning of ECS services at a very granular level on a day-to-day basis. They may reconfigure their networks in real-time, assigning and reassigning telephone numbers to different floors within a building or to different buildings on a campus. Enterprise owners place a high value on this

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<sup>2</sup> NOI ¶ 6.

ability to customize ECS and to modify their systems as their needs change. As such, they are uniquely positioned to manage location information for emergency calling and must have a role to play in ensuring that 911 capabilities are functioning as intended.

The Commission should not inadvertently constrain enterprise owner discretion to deploy and manage ECS customized to meet the unique emergency communications needs of their user populations. User populations do not have uniform emergency communications needs, and many enterprise owners exercise their discretion to customize ECS solutions to address unique challenges and advance the safety of their enterprises. Enterprise owners may configure their ECS to route emergency calls to their own first responders rather than the local PSAP. The organization's internal services may be better equipped than a local PSAP to locate and respond to emergency matters due to specialized knowledge. For example, an industrial facility may prefer emergency calls to be routed to its own first responders, who may have special training to respond to incidents involving chemicals or heavy equipment being used. Similarly, a military base may cover thousands of acres, and configure its system to transmit emergency calls to the nearest on-base first responders, who have familiarity with the base's geography and security protocols.

Enterprise owners may also customize the location information that is transmitted to their internal first responders when an emergency call is dialed. Organizations of all types and sizes have varying conventions for identifying locations, many of which would be of limited utility to an external PSAP. For example, a corporate campus may use a series of letters and numbers to designate a cubicle on a particular floor within a building. Similarly, a university system operator may customize the location information used to direct its first responders to different buildings on a sprawling campus. These customizations, designed to increase safety and

facilitate rapid emergency response, are indicative of the individualized nature of ECS. The Commission should avoid taking action that would limit the ability of enterprise owners to select and deploy customized ECS, particularly those customizations that would promote public safety.

**II. BECAUSE ACHIEVING THE COMMISSION’S OBJECTIVES REQUIRES ONGOING, DYNAMIC MANAGEMENT OF ECS, THE COMMISSION MUST ENGAGE THE ENTERPRISE OWNERS THAT CONTROL SUCH SYSTEMS.**

As the parties exercising control of ECS, directly or indirectly through an ECS operator, enterprise owners are best positioned to manage the dynamic process of keeping those systems up-to-date. The ECS ecosystem is composed of a number of players with varying priorities and interests including enterprise owners, ECS operators, and ECS equipment and service providers. Solutions to address the concerns raised in the NOI – appropriate provision of ANI/ALI and direct dialing of 911 calls – are available from a variety of ecosystem players. For example, AT&T, and other service providers, offer services to ensure that PSAPs receive ALI and ANI necessary to appropriately respond to emergency calls originating from an ECS. But the decision whether to purchase and implement such solutions lies with the enterprise owner.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, if the Commission proposes best practices, standards, or rules governing ECS support for emergency calling, it should consider how to engage the enterprise owner community in that process.

Critically, AT&T is not aware of any automated solutions that can update and provide location information whenever changes are made on the customer premise. Accordingly, any Commission proposal should account for the important role enterprise owners play in maintaining the integrity of the location information. To ensure reliable location information for

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<sup>3</sup> Generally, it is AT&T’s experience that these solutions are purchased in jurisdictions where the ECS customer has various public safety-related obligations.

individuals throughout an enterprise, enterprise owners will need to make an ongoing commitment to keeping the information updated. Location information can become stale over time without the active, cooperative change management required of enterprise owners. Should the Commission move forward with standards or rules, the responsibility for dynamically updating ALI information must reside with enterprise owners.

### **III. STATES SHOULD CONTINUE TO HAVE THE LEAD ROLE IN ADDRESSING ECS SUPPORT FOR 911 CALLS.**

States and localities are in the best position to ensure that ECS supports E911 functionality and keeps pace with technological developments and consumer expectations. These entities are closer to and have more clear authority over enterprise owners and equipment manufacturers, which may fall outside the Commission's jurisdiction.

States should continue to have the leading role on addressing ECS support for 911. State regulators and legislators have greater familiarity with the needs and capabilities of enterprise owners within their jurisdictions. Moreover, states have clear jurisdiction over such entities, most of which do not provide interstate communications by wire or radio. As the Commission notes, "states have broad powers to adopt requirements regarding E911, including using their police powers to place requirements on ECS operators."<sup>4</sup> State-level authorities also have the localized knowledge to inform their decisions on whether state action is required, and the

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<sup>4</sup> *NOI ¶ 14. See also Revision of the Commission's Rules to Ensure Compatibility with Enhanced 911 Emergency Calling Systems*, Report and Order and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 18 FCC Rcd 25340 ¶ 54 (2003) ("*E911 Scope Order*") ("The states have broad powers to adopt requirements regarding E911. State legislatures may pass legislation in order to avail themselves of their police power (as well as other applicable powers) if they determine such powers are necessary to reach all affected parties. There appears to be little question that states have jurisdiction over operators of MLTS and could use their police powers to place requirements upon them.").

Commission has agreed that “the local nature of 911 implementation supports giving states broad discretion to adopt rules requiring [Multi-line Telephone Service (“MLTS”)] to implement E911.”<sup>5</sup> The Commission correctly has concluded in the past—and should find here—that “the unique needs and circumstances of various residential and business MLTS users lead us to the conclusion that greater benefit may be derived from state-level action”<sup>6</sup> than a federal requirement.

Indeed, state and legislative solutions have been successful in implementing 911 direct dialing reforms where those bodies have determined change is needed. Twenty-four states have enacted or drafted legislation requiring enterprises to implement and activate E911 capabilities in their systems, and many states have adopted direct 911 dialing requirements, commonly referred to as “Kari’s Law.”<sup>7</sup> AT&T supports the modernization of ECS and has been actively involved in supporting this type of legislation across the country. In addition, Congress is considering versions of Kari’s Law that would amend the Communications Act to require ECS to support direct dialing of 911.<sup>8</sup> These efforts, designed to increase public safety and facilitate provision of emergency services, are occurring even in the absence of a Commission requirement. The Commission should continue to defer to this legislative process.

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<sup>5</sup> *E911 Scope Order* ¶ 53.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* ¶ 55.

<sup>7</sup> *See NOI* ¶ 14.

<sup>8</sup> On January 23, 2017, the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed the Kari’s Law Act of 2017. *See Kari’s Law Act of 2017*, H.R. 582, 115th Cong. (2017). The U.S. Senate passed a similar bill on August 3, 2017. *See Kari’s Law Act of 2017*, S. 123, 115th Cong. (2017).

AT&T shares the Commission's goal of ensuring that Americans using all types of calling platforms can reliably access 911 services in an emergency. However, the Commission must recognize that the nature of ECS services requires significant customer engagement to achieve this laudable goal. In various cases, the Commission should also be careful not to impinge on enterprise owners' discretion to adopt customized 911 calling solutions that enhance public safety. Given their unique position with respect to day-to-day management of ECS, enterprise owners must be involved in the implementation of emergency calling solutions and, in particular, in dynamically updating location information. Finally, the Commission should continue to defer to states given their clear jurisdiction to address ECS emergency communication concerns.

By:                     /s/                    

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