

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

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
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

**Comments of the  
National Association of State 911 Administrators**

The National Association of State 911 Administrators (NASNA) represents state 911 programs in the field of emergency communications. Established in 1994 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, NASNA is the voice of the states on public policy issues impacting 911. NASNA members believe that state 911 leaders’ expertise can assist industry associations, public policymakers, the private sector, and emergency communications professionals at all levels of government as they address complex issues surrounding the evolution of emergency communications.

The comments submitted below are based upon a consensus of our membership and their collective experience with the provisioning of 911 services.

**III. NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING**

**B. Call Failures**

*Reporting of Outages that Significantly Degrade Communications to PSAP(s).* The Commission notes that some providers appear to be interpreting this provision narrowly to require reporting only when a PSAP is unable to receive *any* 911 calls for a long enough period to meet the reporting threshold, and that this is not consistent with the intent of the Part 4 outage reporting process. NASNA agrees that it should not matter whether a PSAP has suffered a complete loss of ability to receive 911 calls or only a partial loss. It is still an outage that negatively impacts public safety.<sup>1</sup>

The Commission asks how a provider would determine the need to report an outage that results only in a partial “loss of communications” to a PSAP. The discussion then repeatedly refers to “trunks” serving a PSAP. Trunks exist in a legacy environment, but not in a Next Generation 911 (NG911) environment. The nation’s 911 systems, at present, are a mix of legacy and IP technologies. Thus a calculation of magnitude on the basis of “trunks” is limited at best. The issue is a loss of connectivity, regardless of how that connectivity is provisioned.

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<sup>1</sup> Individual members may provide separate comments to the Commission that agree with, amplify, differ from, or are in addition to the comments offered by NASNA on this matter.

The Commission asks whether it should consider establishing a separate reporting threshold based on the number of 911 calls that actually fail to be completed as the result of an outage. This, too, could be problematic as it is not always known in a timely manner how many attempts to call 911 there were during the period of the outage.

The Commission asks if it should set a uniform numerical threshold, or if the threshold should be relative to the number of users a PSAP serves. This, too, is problematic, since the number of users a PSAP serves is not exclusively based on the residential population; there are daily and seasonal fluctuations that confound measurement on that basis.

From NASNA's point of view, the outage reporting metric should not be the number of trunks affected, or the number of calls that actually fail to be completed, or the population the PSAP serves or the number of user minutes. The only metric that makes sense to us is this: If an outage is *of a nature* that potentially prevents some or all 911 calls from getting through to a PSAP *and* lasts at least thirty minutes – regardless of population density – it should be reported. It is a simple solution and not open to interpretation.

#### **D. Wireless Outage Reporting Metrics**

The NPRM states that one of the Commission's goals in creating Part 4 in 2004 was to establish outage reporting rules that would apply regardless of technology employed, but goes on to point out that the Commission has observed in recent years that wireless providers use different methods to calculate the number of users "potentially affected" by an outage. It now seeks to find a uniform method of calculating this number that can be used by all reporting wireless providers, regardless of underlying technology. In order to achieve its objective, the Commission offers two proposals: (1) The wireless provider could calculate the total number of users potentially affected by an outage by multiplying the number of cell sites affected by the average number of users served per site; or (2) a wireless provider could determine the actual number of users that were being served at each affected cell site when the outage began. The Commission also posited the idea of adopting a separate and additional wireless outage reporting requirement based on the geographical scope of an outage regardless of the number of users potentially affected.

NASNA agrees with the Commission's observation that the negative impact to the public from large geographic areas losing wireless coverage for emergency calls grows in significance as the percentage of 911 calls from wireless devices increases. In the interest of being technology neutral, and not just wireless technology neutral, the Commission should adopt the same outage reporting metric we recommend for wireline, i.e., any outage the nature of which would potentially prevent some or all 911 calls from getting through to a PSAP, regardless of population density, and that lasts at least thirty minutes.

#### **F. Part 4 Information Sharing**

In the context of a California Public Utilities Commission petition, the Commission asks a number of questions about allowing state government entities to have access to the Network Outage Reporting System (NORS).

NASNA supports the Commission's proposal to grant states read-only access to those portions of the NORS database concerning outages in their respective states. The specific information should be kept confidential and should not be shared with other parties or made available for public inspection.

Requiring a certification to that effect is reasonable. That said, the fact that an outage is occurring is not confidential, and NASNA sees no issue with alerting the public or other entities. Breaches of confidentiality should be reported, because this will enable the Commission to measure the effectiveness of its confidentiality provisions. All this said, 911 authorities will already receive outage notifications under rules the Commission adopts under other proceedings currently underway. The notification will include contact information on the provider's end. Whatever is adopted here would need to be consistent with these other rules.

NASNA does not think it is feasible to provide the FCC with the identity of individuals authorized to have access, insofar as that is interpreted to mean that the Commission would need to maintain a list. State employees, particularly those who are political appointees, come and go, and maintaining the accuracy of such a list would be highly impractical. An annual confidentiality certification from each state entity authorized to have access, which could include the name of the authorized person(s), should suffice.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer comment, and thank you for your consideration.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Evelyn Bailey".

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