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Mr. Mariona states that SafeLink Wireless and Assurance Wireless provide cellular LifeLine service, which is subsidized by the FCC. Now that Florida is rolling out Text-to-911, this means access to 911 emergency services is more accessible than ever by Florida residents.

However, the phones offered by these companies under LifeLine only have numeric keypads - which do not lend themselves well to texting. Mr. Mariona feels that SafeLink and Assurance should offer at least one device that has a QWERTY keyboard, so that subscribers can easily use the Text-to-911 capabilities that are now becoming available in Florida.

Mr. Mariona points out that using a numeric keypad to compose text messages is very cumbersome, confusing and frustrating for people who are not familiar with the process - and in fact, he feels that using a numeric keypad to compose text messages is inaccessible by a vast majority of consumers, regardless of their disability.

To have text messaging, LifeLine-eligible consumers generally must purchase a more expensive phone/service than they can afford and so do not benefit from the program's valuable subsidies.

Mr. Mariona is requesting that SafeLink Wireless and Assurance Wireless offer a device with a QWERTY keyboard so that consumers can access Text-to-911.