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March 10, 2005

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Ms. Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Dockets 99-200, 04-36 (FCC 05-20, released February 1, 2005)
Ex parte communication, pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the Rules

Dear Mrs. Dortch:

John Melcher and I met March 8th and 9th with the persons copied on this letter to discuss certain consequences for IP 9-1-1 of the SBCIS waiver order referenced above. The waiver order was issued in Docket 99-200. Our discussion also covered issues pending in the IP service general rulemaking, Docket 04-36.

Mr. Melcher is Executive Director of Greater Harris County ("GHC") 9-1-1 Emergency Network, a regional emergency communications district in the Houston area. He is also a Past President of the National Emergency Number Association ("NENA"). John spoke from the attached slides, stressing the imperative for enhancement (location, callback number, selective routing) of calls to 9-1-1 by means of VOIP.

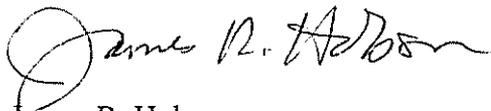
Mr. Melcher explained how the SBCIS waiver order, although not focused on 9-1-1, represents one means of enabling enhanced IP calling to 9-1-1 so long as direct number assignment is followed by satisfactory interconnection with a telephone company tandem. He noted, however, that this is but one of several methods of accomplishing the result. Mr. Melcher said that GHC is not advocating a given method, though it may prefer some over others. Rather, recent incidents of VOIP calls failing to reach a safety answering point have driven home the need for the FCC to make E9-1-1 a VOIP requirement sooner rather than later.

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- 2 -

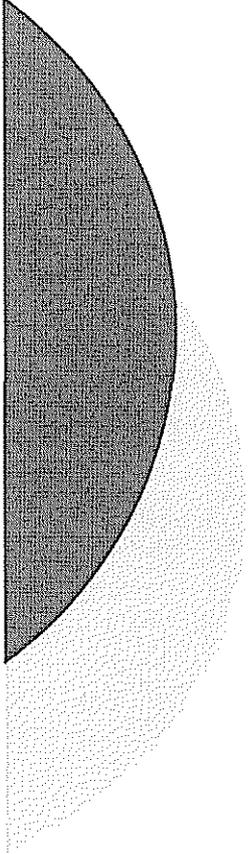
Please direct any questions to the undersigned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James R. Hobson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "H".

James R. Hobson
Counsel to GHC 9-1-1

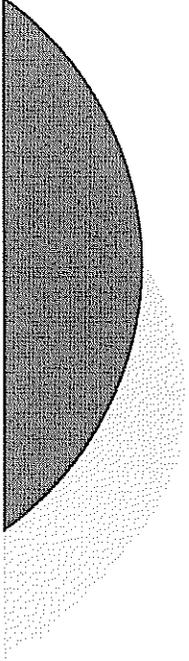
cc: Commissioner Kevin Martin and Senior Legal Advisor Dan Gonzalez
Matt Brill, Senior Legal Advisor to Commissioner Abernathy
Jessica Rosenworcel, Legal Advisor to Commissioner Copps
Scott Bergmann, Legal Advisor to Commissioner Adelstein
Tom Navin, Chief, Competition Policy Division, WCB, and staff



FCC 05-20 Order Granting Waiver for SBCIS & Implications for 9-1-1 Services

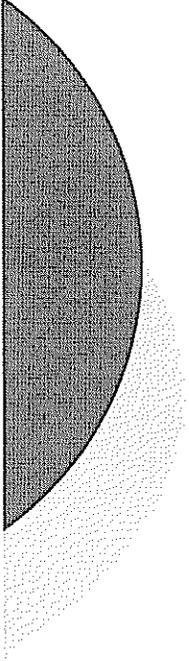
John Melcher
Executive Director
Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network

James R. Hobson
Miller & Van Eaton



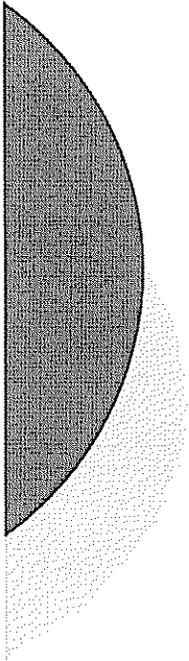
GHC Concurrence with FCC Order

- Realizes efficiencies gained by carrier equivalent interconnection by IP-enabled service providers is in public interest
- Concerned about potential SBCIS competitive advantage as affiliate of SBC
- Supports FCC conditions for granting of waiver:
 - PUC approved ICA
 - Order of interconnection pursuant to tariff that is generally available to other providers of IP-enabled services



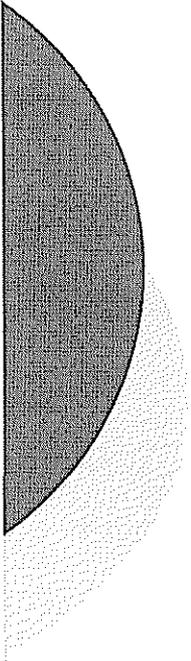
Current Status of SBCIS in Texas

- Testing of 9-1-1 trunks and TNs with Houston NANP code (713) successfully completed 02/15/2005
- SBCIS has provided a copy of commercial agreement between SBCIS and SBC under NDA. The agreement does not include pricing
- SBCIS and GHC will negotiate a service agreement upon completion of template agreement being negotiated with Bexar Metro (San Antonio)
- SBCIS is capable of providing fully enhanced 9-1-1 service for SBCIS subscribers in GHC area



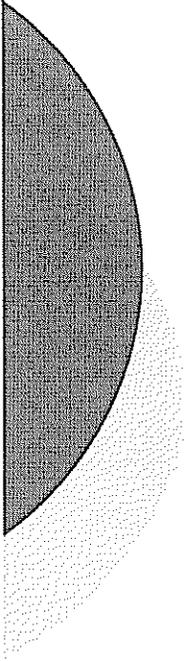
What About Other VoIP Providers with Subscribers in GHC area?

- Vonage contacts with SBC interconnection group have been met with confusion regarding SBC responsibility for interconnection requests from non certificated carriers
- TIPTop tariff has not been amended to include access to 9-1-1
- 9-1-1 interconnection not pursuant to tariff generally available
- SBC position on privacy of 9-1-1 interconnection availability, terms and conditions may create a “natural barrier to competition” for SBCIS competitors in the VoIP arena
- Potentially creates a caste system of access to 9-1-1 systems dependent on “commercial agreement” terms and conditions for interconnection to Selective Router, a monopoly resource



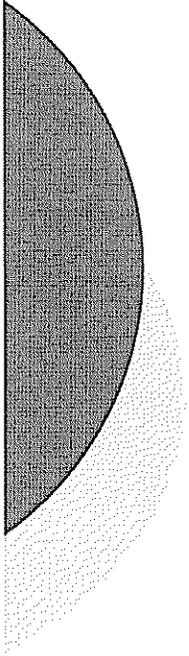
GHC Concerns

- SBCIS, as a non-certified VoIP communications service provider, is enjoying the benefits of interconnection currently unavailable to similar communications service providers
- Many citizens in the GHC area have similar VoIP services from SBCIS competitors and do not have the same level of 9-1-1 service as SBCIS subscribers
- This disparity is directly attributable to lack of formal tariff, accessibility letter, or Special Service Assembly Request (SSAR) intercarrier SS7 connectivity arrangement to the 9-1-1 router and/or database systems by non certified VoIP communication services providers



Functional Fixedness?

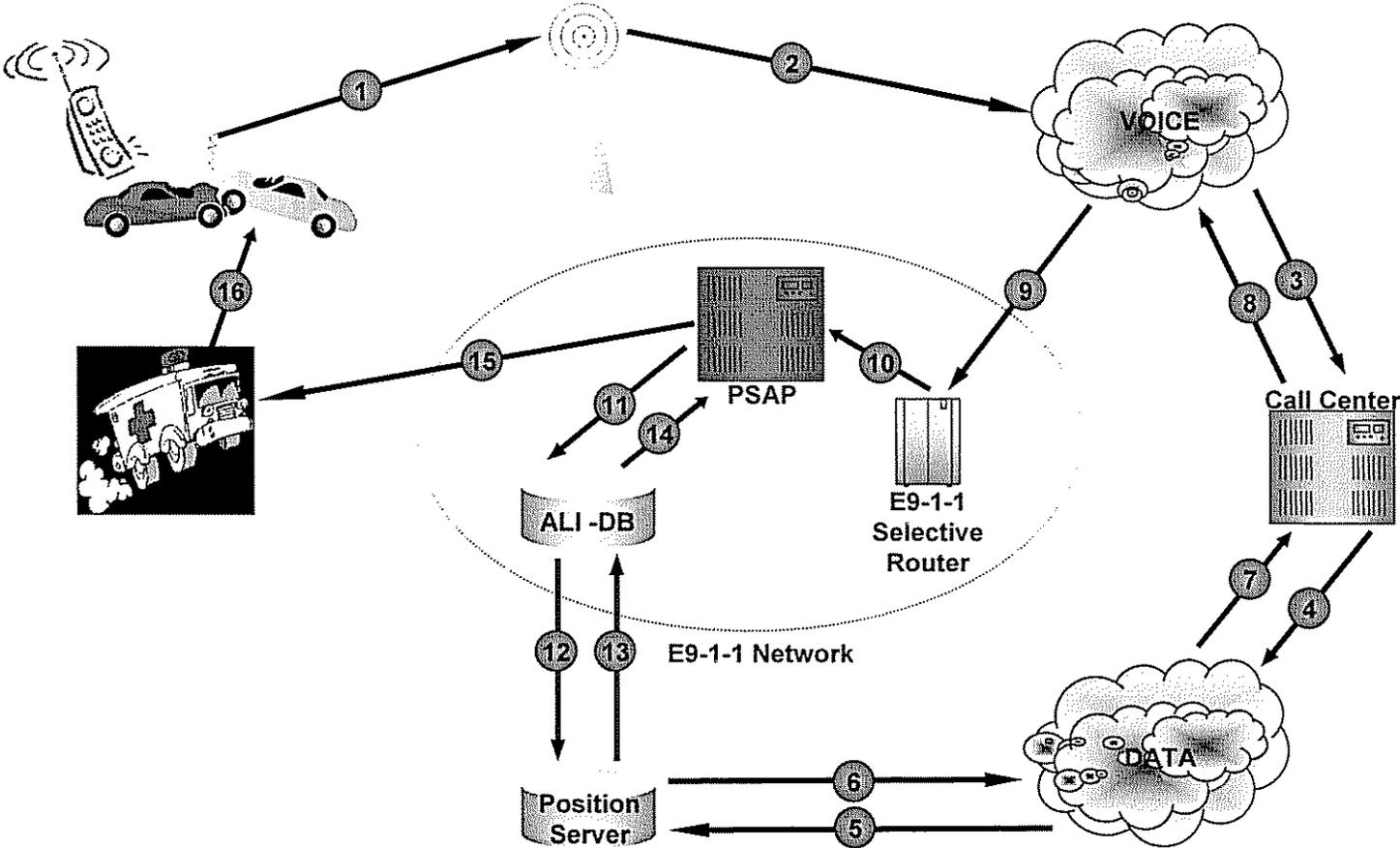
- Historical interconnection to 9-1-1 has been dedicated trunks from communications provider switch to 9-1-1 tandem
- Rooted in ILEC franchise wire center delineation, fixed wireline phones, no local exchange competition
- Dedicated circuits for many VoIP providers economically unsustainable as there are hundreds of 9-1-1 tandems in the U.S.
- It is time to encourage alternative ways to deliver calls to 9-1-1 routing systems

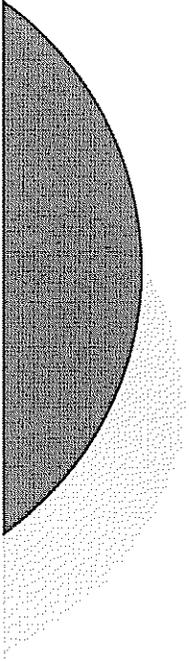


GHC Automatic Crash Notification

- Innovative use of existing network hardware and software to deliver emergency calls from areas not served by the tandem to the appropriate PSAP
- Uses PSTN to deliver call to distant tandem (**see 2 following slides**)
- Uses existing emergency call translations (5ESS, DMS 100, CML) to “convert” PSTN to incoming emergency call and deliver to PSAP via existing wireless ESRK model
- Provides universal access to all SR tandems without expense associated with dedicated trunking
- Low cost alternative for access to 9-1-1 for nascent technology and entrepreneurs

CCAS/Intrado/Selective Router





Next Steps

- Terms and Conditions of access to 9-1-1 system elements must be made readily available to all stakeholders at fair prices similar to existing access prices
- Proven innovative ways to deliver calls as “native 9-1-1” must be promoted so as not to create caste system of access to 9-1-1
- Access to 9-1-1 elements cannot become a happenstance of which IP provider is chosen for service