

**BEFORE THE
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554**

IN THE MATTER OF:)	
)	
IP-Enabled Services)	WC Docket No. 04-36
)	
E911 Requirements for IP-Enabled Service Providers)	WC Docket No. 05-196
)	

REPLY COMMENTS OF THE TENNESSEE REGULATORY AUTHORITY

The Tennessee Regulatory Authority (“TRA”) files these reply comments with the Federal Communications Commission (“Commission”) concerning emergency communications obligations for IP-enabled services. The TRA also expresses support for the National Emergency Number Association’s (“NENA”) position on the necessity of an appropriate federal-state partnership in ensuring adequate emergency communications services.

The TRA asserts that VoIP providers have a public safety obligation to provide 911 emergency service comparable to that provided by traditional telephone service providers and that the regulatory fiat to ensure 911 service is provided is in the public interest. The TRA applauds the Commission’s *VoIP Enhanced 911 (E911)* rules that acknowledge the importance of requiring effective emergency communications in the IP world.¹ The TRA, however, supports the numerous commenters that note the importance of not disrupting

¹ *In the Matters of IP-Enabled Services; E911 Requirements for IP-Enabled Service Providers, First Report and Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, 20 FCC Rcd 10245, ¶¶ 48, 73 (June 3, 2005); see also 47 C.F.R. § 9.5(e) (2005).

telephone service as a means of obtaining “affirmative acknowledgement.”² Thus, the TRA encourages the Commission to choose an alternative other than disconnection to get the attention of consumers that do not acknowledge their carriers’ notifications. Similarly, the TRA supports a reasonable extension of the deadline for customer notification and acknowledgement. The TRA, however, does not recommend an extension of the 911 deployment deadline issued by the Commission.

The TRA supports a joint federal-state partnership in meeting the challenge of expanding emergency communications to the IP world. Intergovernmental relationships not only exist between federal and state governments, but also between state governments and political subdivisions like counties and cities. The TRA supports NENA’s acknowledgement of the unique relations between states and their political subdivisions in funding emergency communications.

Because governmental structures vary across the states, 9-1-1 coordination offices or boards should be given equal consideration with public utility commissions in fashioning federal-state collaboration.³

Tennessee’s emergency communications system illustrates the important roles played by political subdivisions within a state in formulating emergency communications policy, especially with respect to funding.⁴ Tennessee is at the forefront in deploying statewide advanced emergency communications capabilities. Earlier this year, Tennessee

² *Enforcement Bureau Guidance to Interconnected Voice Over Internet Protocol Service Providers Concerning the Subscriber Notification Deadlines*, WC Docket Nos. 04-36, 05-196, *Ex Parte Letter from Chairman Braulio L. Baez of the Florida Public Service Commission* (August 16, 2005).

³ *In the Matters of IP-Enabled Services; E911 Requirements for IP-Enabled Service Providers*, WC Docket Nos. 04-36, 05-196, *Comments of NENA* (August 15, 2005).

⁴ The Tennessee Emergency Communications Board serves as the state’s authority with regard to E911 issues. The Board provides cost recovery to emergency communications districts, telecommunications carriers and E911 service providers for costs associated with implementing, maintaining and advancing wireless E911 service. The local emergency communications districts conduct or govern the call taking and dispatch E911 operations throughout the state. These local districts are financially supported primarily by monthly fees placed on wireline telephone service, but also through a combination of dispatch fees for services to local governments, reimbursements and grants from the state Board, and the statutory remittance from the state Board’s wireless fee collections.

became only the third state to deploy Phase II Enhanced (E911) service statewide. The ubiquitous deployment of 911 services has improved public safety and accelerated the delivery of needed medical services. The goal of both federal and state policy makers should be to prevent any gaps in the 911 safety net. The TRA appreciates the diligent work of the Tennessee Emergency Communications Board in bringing advanced 911 services to Tennessee. The TRA also strongly encourages the Commission to recognize the success of state emergency communications boards and craft rules that allow the states to continue their exemplary work.

Respectfully submitted,


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