USTELECOM
UNITED STATES TELECOM ASSOCIATION

September 11, 2007

Chief Derek Poarch
Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Petition for Reconsideration of USTelecom Association,
EB Docket 06-119

Dear Chief Poarch:

In its Petition for Reconsideration in this proceeding, the USTelecom Association emphasized that its members are fully supportive of the Commission's goal of ensuring the resiliency of communications networks in the event of emergencies. Even in the absence of regulatory mandates, Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers have demonstrated their understanding of the important public safety role they play by designing their networks in compliance with industry best practices to ensure that networks can deliver critical emergency communications during natural or man-made disasters. In particular, ILECs have demonstrated a commitment to designing their networks consistent with the NRIC Best Practices for ensuring that their networks remain operational to the extent reasonably possible in the event of loss of commercial power. As the Katrina Panel concluded in its report to the Commission, the communications industry "has generally been diligent in deploying backup batteries and generators…"

In order to provide the Commission a better understanding of the extent of the industry's voluntary compliance with such Best Practices, the USTelecom Association surveyed its members that would be affected by the proposed back-up power rule[1] concerning their current practices for ensuring that critical network infrastructure can continue to operate in the event of a commercial power outage. The results of this survey demonstrate convincingly that, even without a regulatory mandate, ILECs have implemented comprehensive, multi-faceted network continuity plans that are designed to provide back-up power resources in the event commercial power is lost.

[1] The Commission excluded from the back-up power requirement incumbent LECs that meet the definition of a Class B company as set forth in Section 32.11(b)(2) of the rules, which includes a number of USTelecom member companies.

With respect to on-site back-up power, our survey shows that:

- Virtually all ILEC Central Offices have some source of on-site back-up power to support network facilities; such back-up power sources include batteries, generators, or both.[2]

- Approximately 95% of Central Offices are equipped with on-site back-up power sources *originally designed* to provide at least 24 hours of service. The remaining approximately 5% of Central Offices are equipped with on-site back-up power sources designed to provide 8-12 hours of service.

- Virtually all (more than 99%) of Remote Terminals are equipped with on-site back-up power *originally designed* to ensure at least 4 hours of service; the vast majority of Remote Terminals (more than 95%) were originally designed with at least 8 hours of back-up power.

- For those Remote Terminals with less than 8 hours of back-up battery support, the primary reason for this limitation is size constraints. This includes constraints on the size of the Remote Terminal due to right-of-way limitations, limitations from easements granted by private land owners, and limitations on space in building basements or other Remote Terminal locations. Remote Terminals located in environmentally sensitive areas where safer but less efficient batteries are used also present back-up power challenges.

As USTelecom explained in its Petition, design time and actual service time usually differ. The actual service time provided by back-up batteries will typically diminish over time due to a number of variables. Such variables include, but are not limited to, the age of the battery, temperature changes, and the addition of new equipment, services and customers.

It is also important for the Commission to understand that a fundamental element of the companies' network reliability plans is the use of mobile generators. Mobile generators have an advantage over fixed-location back-up power in that they can be moved out of harm's way in anticipation of an emergency situation and then be redeployed to areas where they are most needed. Moreover, in the event of extended commercial power outages, these mobile generators can be rotated among facilities to re-charge batteries as they are drained.

Because every disaster is unique, it is imperative that carriers have the ability to respond to a crisis with as much flexibility as possible. Thus, the Commission's and the industry's shared goal of continuity of services in the event of a disaster will be best achieved through a holistic

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[2] Subject matter experts from USTelecom member companies developed this information based on good-faith estimates, not exact data. There are more than 200,000 Remote Terminals operated by ILECs in service today. Physical inventories and potential equipment-specific testing by member companies were not possible in many instances.

approach that accounts for the mix of variables that impact disaster recovery efforts and enables the flexible deployment of disaster recovery assets, rather than through uniform and rigid requirements imposed on all carriers. USTelecom member companies have developed appropriate best practices that are distinctly tailored to their respective networks and assets, the unique characteristics for the geographic areas, and the types of customers they serve.

In summary, USTelecom's member companies have invested extensive resources in developing network reliability plans consistent with network engineering best practices – not because they were required to do so, but as stewards of these important emergency communications facilities because it is the right thing to do. But it is critical that these companies continue to have flexibility to address back-up power demands in a manner that recognizes differences among, for example, location of emergency providers, geography and weather, and environmental and space limitations on network design.

Please let me know if you have any questions concerning this information. Pursuant to Commission rules, we are providing a copy of this letter to be included in the docket of this proceeding.

Sincerely,

Glenn Reynolds
Vice President, Policy