

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

In the Matters of)	
)	
IP-Enabled Services)	WC Docket No. 04-36
)	
Implementation of Sections 255 and 251(a)(2) of)	
The Communications Act of 1934, as Enacted by)	
The Telecommunications Act of 1996: Access to)	WT Docket No. 96-198
Telecommunications Service, Telecommunications)	
Equipment and Customer Premises Equipment by)	
Persons with Disabilities)	
)	
Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-)	CG Docket No. 03-123
to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing)	
and Speech Disabilities)	
)	
The Use of N11 Codes and Other Abbreviated)	
Dialing Arrangements)	CC Docket No. 92-105
)	

COMMENTS OF SPRINT NEXTEL CORPORATION

Sprint Nextel Corporation, (“Sprint”) hereby respectfully submits these brief comments in response to the *Order and Public Notice Seeking Comment*, DA 09-749 (*April 1 Order/Public Notice*) released April 1, 2009 by the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau (“CGB”) in the above-referenced dockets.

In the *April 1 Order/Public Notice*, CGB continued the limited waiver “of the requirement that traditional telecommunications relay service (TRS) providers must automatically and immediately call an appropriate Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) when receiving an emergency 711-dialed call placed by an interconnected VoIP user” for an additional 90 days, *i.e.*, until June 29, 2009 and requested comments “on the remaining technical, operational, or other issues that currently prevent traditional TRS providers from being able to

reliably identify the appropriate PSAP to call when receiving an emergency call via 711 and an interconnected VoIP service.” *April 1 Order/Public Notice* at ¶1. Sprint believes that the waiver should be made permanent and in support thereof states as follows:

To Sprint’s knowledge, providers of interconnected VoIP services have yet to overcome the substantial technical and operational difficulties that would enable them to provide to the providers of traditional TRS service the correct location information of their deaf and hard-of-hearing subscribers so that the TRS provider would be able to immediately and automatically route the call to the appropriate PSAP. As Sprint pointed out in its comments filed December 3, 2007 (at 2), providing location information is the condition precedent to enabling TRS providers to route the call to the correct PSAP.¹ And until VoIP providers are able to satisfy this condition, TRS providers simply will not “be able to consistently route interconnected VoIP-originated 711 emergency calls in the manner prescribed by section 64.604(a)(4) of the Commission’s rules.” *April 1 Order/Public Notice* at ¶13.

That VoIP providers apparently have yet to expend the necessary resources to enable them to provide location information of their subscribers who seek to place emergency calls through relay is completely understandable. Such providers are unlikely to have more than a handful of subscribers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. This is so because the broadband facilities that a deaf or hard-of-hearing individual needs to place interconnected VoIP calls service can just as easily be used to place calls through IP Relay or VRS. In fact, deaf and hard-of-hearing users with broadband connections to their homes and offices are virtually certain to

¹ Some providers of traditional TRS service have set up a separate toll free number in each of their States to handle calls to their centers from VoIP users. However, the fact that these providers can identify calls as being from VoIP users does not enable them to immediately and automatically transfer emergency calls from such users to the appropriate PSAP. Indeed, it is Sprint’s understanding that on the rare occasion that any of these providers receive an emergency call from a VoIP user, their CAs ask for the location of the caller before transferring the call.

use IP Relay or VRS to meet their communications needs since they receive such services free of charge whereas they would have to pay for their VoIP service and since the analog-based TTY Baudot tones may be corrupted or suffer degradation when passed through a VoIP provider's packet-based broadband network.²

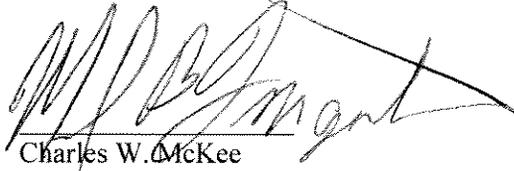
If contrary to Sprint's position here the Commission decides that VoIP providers must ensure that their deaf or hard-of-hearing subscribers, if any, in need of emergency services are able to reach a PSAP through a traditional TRS provider, Sprint recommends that the Commission continue the waiver until VoIP providers are able to provide information to the TRS providers to enable them to determine that the call is VoIP-originated and accurately determine the callers location. Specifically, providers of interconnected VoIP must modify the data stream that accompany the calls they send to TRS providers to include a unique information digit which would enable the TRS provider to identify the call as being a VoIP call. VoIP providers should also be required to either provide the TRS provider with the ANI that identifies the caller's actual

² Although Sprint does not determine whether the emergency calls it continues to receive at its relay centers through which it provides traditional TRS service are PSTN-originated or VoIP-originated, it receives relatively few emergency calls from traditional TRS users each month. And the number of such calls has been falling. For example, in the first 4 months of 2009, Sprint's Relay Center for the State of Texas received just 22 emergency calls from traditional TRS users, down nearly 50% from the number of such calls (43) Sprint's Texas Relay Center during the first 4 months of 2008 and down 60% from the number of such calls it received (55) during the first 4 months of 2007. Sprint attributes this drop to (1) the efforts by TRS providers and the associations representing deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals to inform users of traditional TRS services that they can contact the PSAP directly by dialing 911 bypassing the relay service provider and saving time; and (2) the fact that with the rise of Internet-based relay services, the number of individuals using traditional TRS services has fallen. In any event, Sprint continues to handle all emergency calls from individuals using traditional TRS services regardless of whether such calls are PSTN-based or VoIP-based. Using the ANI or other information it receives from the caller Sprint will connect the caller to the PSAP that its database shows is the one "that the caller would have reached if he had dialed 911 directly, or ... that is capable of enabling the dispatch of emergency services to the caller in an expeditious manner." 47 CFR § 64.604(a)(4). Sprint is unaware of any situation in which the PSAP called was not "capable of enabling the dispatch emergency services" to the caller.

location or at least ensure that the ALI databases include the most up-to-date registered location information of their subscribers. Armed with the knowledge that an emergency call is VoIP-originated and that the ALI-database includes the accurate information as to the caller's registered location, the TRS provider should be able to immediately and automatically route the call to the appropriate PSAP.

Respectfully submitted,

SPRINT NEXTEL CORPORATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charles W. McKee', written over a horizontal line.

Charles W. McKee
Michael B. Fingerhut
2001 Edmund Halley Drive
Reston, Virginia 20191
(703) 592-5112

Its Attorneys

May 28, 2009