

10-4

Office of Cybersecurity and Communications
National Protection and Programs Directorate
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528



Homeland Security

June 13, 2011

Received & Inspected

JUN 20 2011

FCC Mail Room

Paul J. Feiner
Town Supervisor
Town of Greenburgh
177 Hillside Avenue
Greenburgh, NY 10607

Dear Supervisor Feiner:

Thank you for your letter of May 10, 2011, to Secretary Napolitano regarding your experience encountering cell phone coverage gaps in Westchester County, New York. I agree that cell phone service can be important to families and emergency response officials during national security and emergency events. Secretary Napolitano forwarded your letter to me to respond.

Within the National Protection and Programs Directorate's Office of Cybersecurity and Communications, the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) is working closely with state, local and tribal governments, including the State of New York, on a range of communications issues. This includes deploying current and next generation communications technologies to ensure that emergency responders can communicate as needed, on demand, and as authorized; at all levels of government; and across all disciplines.

We work closely with the State of New York on these issues. You may wish for the Town of Greenburgh to provide input to the New York Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan. Vincent Stile is the New York Statewide Interoperability Coordinator and point of contact for public safety communications issues for all jurisdictions in the State (vstile@dhses.ny.gov). Any questions on Department of Homeland Security (DHS) activities related to emergency communications in your Region can be addressed to Chris Tuttle, the DHS Regional Coordinator (christopher.tuttle@dhs.gov).

In addition, the National Communications System (NCS) is working with the telecommunications industry to ensure authorized users can complete calls during emergency situations when cellular service becomes congested. Detailed information can be found at www.ncs.gov under the category, "Priority Services." The Greenburgh Police Department and several departments of Westchester County participate in these priority service programs. If you need further information, please contact our Service Center at 866-NCS-CALL (627-2255).

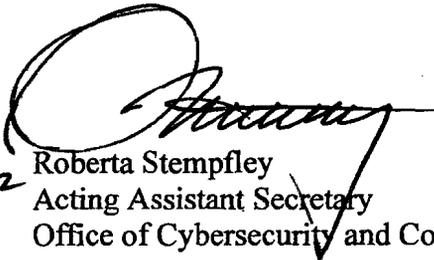
Your suggested approach to inventorying the coverage might be facilitated by some of the sources of information noted in the enclosed Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Consumer Facts paper, "Understanding Wireless Telephone Coverage Areas." The paper notes the coverage maps available on the websites of the cellular carriers as well as some carrier-independent sources.

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The FCC is also aware of coverage gap issues and is working to facilitate better coverage by amending its rules via WT Docket No. 10-4 to permit consumer use of signal boosters to extend coverage into areas not yet covered by the carriers. For the longer term, the FCC is pursuing its "National Broadband Plan: Connecting America," which calls for a concerted initiative to improve both cellular and landline broadband coverage nationwide. Concurrently, OEC is working with Federal, state, local, and tribal agencies to facilitate the development of a public safety wireless broadband network.

Thank you again for your letter, and I hope that this information is helpful.

Sincerely,



for Roberta Stempfley
Acting Assistant Secretary
Office of Cybersecurity and Communications

Enclosure

cc: Federal Communications Commission
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554



TOWN of GREENBURGH

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PAUL J. FEINER
Supervisor

May 10, 2011

Secretary Janet Napolitano
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Napolitano,

Frequently, when I am driving around the county and using my cell phone, my phone doesn't work. There are many areas around the county that are not covered by cell phone service. I think I'm in a third world country - my phone dies on me during the middle of telephone conversations.

In the event of a terrorist attack or emergency evacuation, cell phone coverage could be important for families and law enforcement officials. Cell service provides a link to family members and to public safety officials. I think that the county should conduct an annual inventory of areas around the county that do not have cell service (by carrier) and that the county should publicize the areas that lack coverage. This should be coordinated with the local police force and be incorporated into emergency preparation plans. Localities should be encouraged to work with civic groups to address this problem.

The inventory of areas in the county that are not covered by cell phone service should be posted on the county's website. This map could be useful to those who are considering contracting with cellular phone companies for service. Some services may be better than others and residents should be able to make informed decisions.

Sincerely,


Paul J. Feiner
Town Supervisor

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