

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of)	
)	
Improving 9-1-1 Reliability)	PS Docket No. 13-75
)	
Reliability and Continuity of Communications)	PS Docket No. 11-60
Networks, Including Broadband Technologies)	

REPLY COMMENTS OF CENTURYLINK

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COMMENTS OF CENTURYLINK

CenturyLink files these reply comments in response to the comments filed on May 13, 2013 to the *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)* issued in the above-referenced dockets.¹ The *NPRM* seeks input on approaches to ensure the reliability and resiliency of communications infrastructure necessary to ensure continued availability of the nations' 9-1-1 system during times of major disaster. The *NPRM* is taken in response to the derecho storm of June 2012 and the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau's *Derecho Report* which investigated disruptions of 9-1-1 related communications following that extraordinary event.²

I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

The derecho was a substantial and unprecedented test of the 9-1-1 network.³ While most 9-1-1 communications networks performed well during the storm and its aftermath, some limited but concerning failures reveal the need to examine the reliability and resiliency of the 9-1-1

¹ *Improving 9-1-1 Reliability; Reliability and Continuity of Communications Networks, Including Broadband Technologies*, PS Docket Nos. 13-75 and 11-60, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 28 FCC Rcd 3414 (2013); 78 Fed. Reg. 21879 (Apr. 12, 2013).

² *Impact of the June 2012 Derecho on Communications Networks and Services*, Report and Recommendations, A Report of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, FCC, 2013 FCC Lexis 284 (rel. Jan. 10, 2013) (Derecho Report).

³ See generally, Derecho Report, Executive Summary at 1-2.

network. A best practices approach has proven successful and remains appropriate to consider the benefits and costs of various measures intended to better protect public safety.

CenturyLink constantly invests in its network and proactively reviews its network performance, especially in the wake of events like the derecho which constituted a unique and extreme test of network reliability and resiliency. CenturyLink's (and the industry's) core business depends on the provision of reliable service to its customers; reliable service is a competitive necessity. To this end, the industry invests billions of dollars annually to improve and reinforce network capabilities⁴ and to leverage "lessons learned" from events like the derecho. Though some carriers experienced network failures which were addressed with those carriers by the FCC and state public utility commissions, it would be inappropriate to deviate from the current best practices approach to impose one-size-fits-all rules for the entire industry based on those discrete failures. The solid performance of most carriers' networks during and after this historic storm demonstrates the industry's strong emphasis and commitment to network reliability absent prescriptive reliability rules. The FCC should encourage further collaboration among stakeholders to examine the next steps appropriate to yield tangible public safety benefits in improved network reliability and resiliency in light of the cost and varied network issues carriers face. CenturyLink supports a best practices approach and agrees with those commenters urging the Commission to ensure that providers retain the flexibility to tailor their 9-1-1 reliability and resiliency practices to the unique needs of their individual networks. Rather than adopting prescriptive rules, the FCC should convene a working group of interested stakeholders from the public and private sectors to develop a core set of practices which could, if appropriate, be certified to the FCC. This process would facilitate the reasoned and detailed consideration of

⁴ Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions (ATIS) Comments at p. 4.

proposed practices together with important related issues such as the cost, the associated public safety benefits to be realized, the timeframe for implementation, the impact on the transition to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1), and the details of any certification that may be considered.

CenturyLink opposes prescriptive rules or requirements in the areas of circuit auditing and backup power and agrees with those commenters expressing concern about the extreme burden that mandated network-wide requirements would create. To the extent any audits are mandated, those audits should be treated as proprietary business information that is presumed confidential. CenturyLink supports sharing summary information with its PSAP customers that is directly applicable to them.

CenturyLink supports the *NPRM's* definition of "9-1-1 service provider" and opposes attempts to broaden the scope of that term. Overly broad constructions of that term may inadvertently generate confusion with respect to regulatory responsibilities.

The *NPRM* proposes changes to the PSAP notification rule in an effort to improve PSAP communications. In the event of a service disruption, the proposed rule would require 9-1-1 service providers to provide more specific information more quickly to PSAPs than the current rule requires. CenturyLink agrees with those commenters that favor retaining and enforcing the current rule. The proposed rule risks an unintended and undesirable consequence of 9-1-1 service providers inadvertently relaying inaccurate or unconfirmed information to PSAPs in order to satisfy the unduly short notification time imposed by the proposed rule.

In light of the potential high cost of complying with the *NPRM's* proposals, it is important that any new compliance mandates have demonstrable public interest benefits. The *NPRM's* cost-benefit analysis does not adequately link how proposed improvements to the 9-1-1 network would translate to tangible public safety benefits. To the extent costly new compliance

measures can be justified and are adopted, the FCC should consider whether a federal funding mechanism would be appropriate to achieve desired 9-1-1 reliability and resiliency objectives.

II. 9-1-1 SERVICE PROVIDERS NEED FLEXIBILITY TO TAILOR RELIABILITY AND RESILIENCY PRACTICES TO THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL NETWORKS

As stated by the ATIS and others, the industry recognizes the importance of 9-1-1 reliability and is acutely aware that maintaining and protecting networks and services is essential not only in the interest of public safety, but in the competitive marketplace as well.⁵ Competitive market pressures drive communications providers to implement voluntary best practices and other reasonable measures to make their networks more reliable, advanced and robust.⁶ The fact of the matter is that carriers need to invest in network reliability in order to effectively compete in today's crowded marketplace. While there are lessons to be learned from the derecho, the solid performance of most carriers' networks in its wake demonstrates a strong emphasis and commitment to network reliability absent additional prescriptive reliability rules.

A. The Commission Should Convene a Stakeholder Working Group to Examine Core Practices and Consider Whether Certification Is Appropriate

CenturyLink appreciates the Commission's consideration of the appropriate balance between voluntary best practices and regulatory mandates as related to 9-1-1 communications.⁷ Best practices have been successfully developed collaboratively by the industry on the basis that they were voluntary and distinct from mandated requirements. Uniformly mandating compliance with best practices is ill-advised because it would eliminate the flexibility necessary for service providers to meet network-specific demands and customer expectations, as well as potentially

⁵ See, e.g., ATIS at p. 4; AT&T, Inc. (ATT) Comments at pp. 1-2, 7.

⁶ ATT at p. 7.

⁷ *NPRM*, 28 FCC Rcd at 3423-24 ¶ 20.

stifle the development of future best practices going forward.⁸ This approach facilitates innovation and development of practices that improve upon current capabilities in specific areas. Best practices are developed in a consensus-based environment and are not considered to be universally applicable.⁹ For example, a best practice may be cost-prohibitive for a rural carrier to undertake though may be more manageable for mid-size or large carriers. Best practices are also fluid and can be updated to account for technology and network growth, such as the transition to NG9-1-1.¹⁰

The Commission should continue its active support of, and participation in, the development and application of core industry practices for 9-1-1 reliability.¹¹ The success of these types of efforts has been well-documented.¹² An existing working group of interested public and private stakeholders should be charged to review best practices and other proposals to determine whether a core subset of them should be adopted. This collaborative process would facilitate the reasoned and detailed consideration of proposed practices together with important related issues such as the cost and timeframe for 9-1-1 service providers to implement these measures. While the *NPRM* provides some cost estimates, commenters caution that those estimates understate -- in some cases quite significantly -- the true costs of compliance.¹³ CenturyLink echoes this concern, and provides data concerning how the *NPRM* underestimates certain backup power costs below in Section II.C. Cost data could be examined more thoroughly

⁸ ATIS at pp. 5-6.

⁹ *Id.* at p. 5.

¹⁰ *Id.* at p. 6.

¹¹ Verizon and Verizon Wireless (VZ) Comments at pp. 7-9.

¹² ATIS at pp. ii, 5-6.

¹³ VZ at pp. 11-12; *see also* Frontier Communications Corporation (or FTR) Comments at pp. ii, 6-10, 12-13.

in a working group setting, as well as the implementation timeline associated with any proposed reliability measures. 9-1-1 service providers best know their own networks and can best assess their readiness and timeframes to implement any applicable reliability standards. This approach would also enable full consideration of how the transition to NG9-1-1 impacts the need for proposed reliability measures for the traditional 9-1-1 network. The *Derecho Report* observes the “relative advantage in reliability and performance that migration to [NG9-1-1] ... will bring over ‘legacy’ 9-1-1 systems,”¹⁴ and notes that “[h]ad these [NG9-1-1] architectures and capabilities been in place in the affected areas, they likely could have significantly lessened the derecho’s impact on emergency communications.”¹⁵ Thus, the deployment of NG9-1-1 may reduce the need for prescriptive regulation of at least some elements of the legacy 9-1-1 network. The working group setting is particularly well-suited to periodically review rules and requirements to take into account the continuing advancement of technology.¹⁶

Finally, to the extent the working group concludes to recommend that the Commission adopt a core set of best practices, the working group should also consider whether it would be appropriate to require 9-1-1 service providers to certify their compliance with them. The working group process should consider issues related to the certification, *e.g.*, how frequently a certification should be made, what representative needs to provide the certification and on what basis, what degree of compliance should be required (*e.g.*, 100 percent or something less), whether any allowances should be made for 9-1-1 service providers in rural areas or other hardship scenarios, whether 9-1-1 service providers certifying to less than required should face enforcement action or be eligible for a rule waiver. The Commission’s other proposals beyond

¹⁴ *Derecho Report* at 2.

¹⁵ *Id.* at 44.

¹⁶ *NPRM*, 28 FCC Rcd at 3447 ¶ 81.

certification -- reporting, reliability requirements, and on-site inspections -- are unwarranted and would impose a significant compliance burden for both 9-1-1 service providers and the Commission with little corresponding benefit.¹⁷

B. CenturyLink Opposes Calls for Mandatory Circuit Audits

Various commenters support mandating CSRIC Best Practice 8-7-0532: “Network Operators should periodically audit the physical and logical diversity called for by network design and take appropriate measures as needed.”¹⁸ This example shows why best practices should not be relabeled as prescriptive rules. On this specific best practice, physical audits are notoriously labor-intensive and time-consuming, especially for a large carrier such as CenturyLink. Indeed, Frontier estimated that it would take nine full-time employees to complete this audit on an annual basis, assuming the employees had no other responsibilities.¹⁹ AT&T describes conducting physical audits on a network-wide basis as a “practical impossibility from a time and resource perspective.”²⁰ CenturyLink opposes making this a requirement in light of the extreme burden it would cause and the lack of attendant public safety benefit shown. While a computerized diversity audit would ameliorate the resource issue of manual audits, CenturyLink currently does not have this capability and notes that this sort of systemization would be extremely time- and resource-intensive. Accordingly, CenturyLink cannot support AT&T’s call for certification of computerized diversity audits at this time.²¹ Moreover, there is no evidence about how more resilient or reliable 9-1-1 networks would be as a result of conducting physical

¹⁷ *NPRM*, 28 FCC Rcd at 3427-29 ¶¶ 28-31.

¹⁸ *Id.* at 3426 n. 70. *And see, e.g.*, Mission Critical Partners (MCP) Comments at pp. 6-8.

¹⁹ FTR at p. 9.

²⁰ ATT at p. 12.

²¹ *Id.* at pp. 13-14.

or logical diversity audits, and how this translates into tangible public safety benefits justifying the costs. As observed by Frontier, the costs of remedying single points of failure and making networks diverse is potentially staggering and must be more fully considered.²²

Notwithstanding this position, if the Commission were to require 9-1-1 service providers to conduct audits, CenturyLink urges the Commission to afford audits a presumption of confidentiality and not require disclosure to PSAPs.²³ As with outage reports, the data contained in the audits is likely to be sensitive both to national security and to commercial competitiveness. The FCC has long recognized a presumption of confidentiality for outage reports²⁴ and should treat audits in the same manner to ensure that proprietary business information is sufficiently protected. CenturyLink supports sharing summary information with its PSAP customers that is directly applicable to them.

C. 9-1-1 Service Providers Should Have Flexibility with Respect to Back-Up Power Arrangements

CenturyLink understands that reliable central office backup power is essential to maintain communications during large scale emergencies and that backup power failures can have severe consequences as discussed in the *Derecho Report*.²⁵ There are numerous best practices associated with backup power that CenturyLink generally follows to ensure functionality in an emergency, including engine maintenance, battery maintenance, battery backup requirements, fuel reserves, just to name a few. Numerous states also impose specific backup power

²² Frontier at pp. 10-11.

²³ Fairfax County, Virginia Comments (Fairfax) at p. 4; Information Technology Advisory Commission of Arlington County, Virginia (Arlington ITAC) at the third page (pages are not numbered).

²⁴ 47 C.F.R. § 4.2.

²⁵ Derecho Report at 15-20, 27, 33.

requirements.²⁶ Given the wide breadth of existing best practices coupled with state backup power requirements, additional FCC requirements in this arena are not necessary. Rather, 9-1-1 service providers need flexibility to tailor backup power plans on an individualized basis given the variety of network configurations and mitigation strategies present today. To the extent there is a backup power issue with an individual carrier, the FCC and state public utility commissions can address that issue with that carrier.

CenturyLink estimates that it has approximately 4000 central offices nationwide. Approximately 3000 of those central offices have a permanent on-site, auto-start, auto-transfer engine-alternator.²⁷ The remainder is served by portable generators. While CenturyLink believes the *NPRM's* cost estimate ranges for generator installation²⁸ and battery testing²⁹ are reasonable, the generator testing cost estimates are extremely low.³⁰ Actual costs would be much higher because (1) it is reasonable to assume that 10 percent of the offices with onsite generators are not having these tests performed (the same percentage the Commission assumes for batteries) rather than 5 percent as assumed in the *NPRM*; (2) fuel costs will be higher to test for the run times required in best practices; (3) additional maintenance and testing/replacement of additional parts is often required, as well as required lab testing of fuel and coolant, combined with

²⁶ See, e.g., Alabama Public Service Commission Rules and Regulations, Telephone Rules, Rule T-21, Minimum Service Standards, at 48. (http://www.psc.alabama.gov/Administrative/TelephoneRules_05202011.pdf); Colorado Code of Regulations, Department of Regulatory Agencies, Public Utility Commission, 4 CCR 723-2 (2013), Telecommunications Service Providers and Telephone Utilities, Section 2335 (The Provision of Service During Maintenance or Emergencies).

²⁷ CenturyLink estimates that there are approximately 25,000 central offices nationwide. These figures highlight the substantial burden even a reporting obligation concerning backup power would create.

²⁸ *NPRM*, 28 FCC Rcd at 3437 ¶ 52.

²⁹ *Id.* at ¶ 53.

³⁰ *Id.* at 3437-38 ¶ 54.

additional technician hours associated with these tasks. Taking these items into consideration yields the following estimate for the costs to perform generator testing at sites where it is not currently being routinely done, assuming an average 100 kW diesel engine loaded at 55%, consuming 5 gallons/hour with a fuel cost of \$4/gallon:

- 16 annual routine run hours x \$4/gallon x 5 gallons/hour x 1838 central offices = \$588,000
- Technician time = 16 annual routine run hours + 19 annual routine run hours for other tests x \$80/hour x 1838 central offices = \$5,145,000
- Parts costing an average \$3300/site x 1838 central offices = \$6,036,750
- \$588,000 + \$5,145,000 + \$6,036,750 = \$11,796,750

This is an entire order of magnitude higher than the *NPRM*'s upper cost estimate of \$1,176,000 (\$882,000 + \$294,000).³¹ The *NPRM* also underestimates the costs to repair generators.

CenturyLink's experience is that repair costs are much more costly than the \$320-640 estimated, and that generator repair is a specialized field that commands premium hourly rates higher than the \$80 assumed.³²

Eliminating the tandem generator issue is also much more costly to resolve than estimated in the *NPRM*. CenturyLink alone has about 60 central offices with interdependent tandem generators. This figure is considerably higher than the *NPRM*'s estimate of 25 central offices nationwide having interdependent generators,³³ and CenturyLink's experience is that the cost to automate a load-shedding arrangement is also significantly more costly than the \$10,000 provided in the *NPRM*. CenturyLink estimates the costs for automated load shedding (as opposed to manual load shedding) to be \$20,000-30,000 per site, including specialized engine controls and DC plant sequencing controllers. Many of these sites have a multiplicity of DC

³¹ *NPRM*, 28 FCC Rcd at 3437-38 ¶ 54.

³² *Id.* at 3438 ¶ 55.

³³ *Id.* at ¶ 56.

plants and more than two large engines which contribute to higher costs. If new generators were to be installed to reach non-interdependent status, CenturyLink estimates the costs to be at least \$300,000 per site given the large size of the generators involved (typically over 1MW) and associated engineering and installation costs.

These examples highlight some of the challenges associated with prescriptive one-size-fits-all regulation and potential costs of mandated solutions. The Commission should allow 9-1-1 service providers flexibility to tailor backup power plans on an individualized basis to meet customer needs efficiently and effectively. The working group forum is well-suited to consider these challenges and collaborate on potential solutions.

D. CenturyLink Supports Public Education on Residential Battery Backup Issues

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission's comments discuss the need for a public educational effort to make consumers aware of the capabilities and limitations of current battery backup for certain residential broadband services.³⁴ CenturyLink supports being part of a public-private working group to explore this issue and promote consumer awareness.

III. THE COMMISSION SHOULD ADOPT THE *NPRM*'S DEFINITION OF 9-1-1 SERVICE PROVIDER

CenturyLink supports the *NPRM*'s definition of 9-1-1 Service Provider as a communications provider "responsible for routing and delivering 9-1-1 calls to PSAPs" including all entities that provide 9-1-1 call routing, ALI database services, emergency services on Internet protocol networks, and similar services directly to a PSAP.³⁵ While ILECs traditionally provide these services, as AT&T observes, this will change as technology evolves

³⁴ Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (Pa PUC) Comments at pp. 5-6.

³⁵ *NPRM*, 28 FCC Rcd at 3425 ¶ 23 (citation omitted); ATT at p. 9 (citation omitted).

and NG9-1-1 is deployed.³⁶ The definition is flexible enough to accommodate this transition without being overly broad so as to potentially confuse where regulatory responsibilities lie. If more specificity is desired, CenturyLink also supports the American Cable Association's (ACA) clarification to the proposed definition to include only entities providing communications services directly to PSAPs under contract, tariff or other direct arrangement.³⁷

IV. THE COMMISSION SHOULD RETAIN THE CURRENT PSAP NOTIFICATION RULE

CenturyLink appreciates the Commission's efforts to improve PSAP communication by revising the PSAP notification rule, 47 C.F.R. § 4.9, to facilitate timely, clear and appropriately targeted communication between 9-1-1 service providers and PSAPs in the event of a service disruption.³⁸ The current rule requires that 9-1-1 service providers, "as soon as possible," convey to the PSAP "all available information that may be useful to the management of the affected facility in mitigating the effects of the outage on efforts to communicate with that facility."³⁹ The proposed rule requires notification from the 9-1-1 service provider "immediately" of very specific information -- the nature of outage, the estimated number of users affected or potentially affected, the location of those users, the actions being taken by the provider to address the outage, the estimated time when service will be restored, recommended actions the impacted facility should take to minimize disruption of service, and the sender's contact information.⁴⁰ Thus, the proposed rule requires that 9-1-1 service providers notify PSAPs even more quickly than the current rule and provide even more detail than the current rule requires, which could

³⁶ ATT at p. 10.

³⁷ ACA Comments at pp. 6-8.

³⁸ *NPRM*, 28 FCC Rcd at 3441-42 ¶ 67.

³⁹ 47 C.F.R. § 4.9.

⁴⁰ *NPRM*, 28 FCC Rcd at 3456-57 (Appendix B).

adversely affect the accuracy of the information conveyed. CenturyLink agrees with other commenters that recognize the tension the proposed rule creates and questions whether the proposed rule, in practice, would achieve the Commission's goal of measurably improving PSAP communication.

CenturyLink understands that PSAP communication is absolutely essential in an outage event and strives to provide its PSAP customers with all the information they need as soon as possible in the instance of a service disruption. 9-1-1 service disruptions are emergency situations and are treated as such, with CenturyLink working feverishly to gather information, investigate root causes, analyze impacts and develop solutions. By shortening the already tight timeframe for PSAP notice from "as soon as possible" to "immediate[]," CenturyLink shares the concerns of other commenters that much of the information required by the proposed rule simply may be unknown, unavailable, or inaccurate at that extremely early stage of a service disruption.⁴¹ Maintaining the current rule retains the necessary sense of urgency for PSAP communication while improving the likelihood that the information conveyed will be accurate and therefore most useful to the PSAP.

Further, CenturyLink already provides much of the information in the proposed rule to PSAPs without a specific mandate to do so. Service disruptions are not one-size-fits-all events, and should not be subject to a rigid, one-size-fits-all notification rule. The current rule provides 9-1-1 service providers some important flexibility to customize information to specific service disruption scenarios, as well as to PSAP needs and preferences. The current rule, if followed, should provide PSAPs the information they need to respond to service disruptions in an appropriate manner.

⁴¹ ATT at p. 23; VZ at pp. 18-21.

Finally, even if the Commission concludes to move forward with its proposed rule notwithstanding these concerns, the Commission should not require a 9-1-1 service provider as part of the PSAP notification process to provide “recommended actions the impacted facility should take to minimize disruption of service[s].”⁴² CenturyLink agrees that the ultimate decision on such actions “is and should be in the hands of the PSAPs.”⁴³ As noted by Verizon, PSAPs are emergency response professionals and, beyond re-routing, 9-1-1 service providers may not be in a position to recommend other alternatives or responsive actions the PSAP should take.⁴⁴

V. ANY NEW REGULATORY MANDATES SHOULD HAVE DEMONSTRABLE PUBLIC INTEREST BENEFITS TO JUSTIFY THE COST

The *NPRM* seeks “to determine the benefits to consumers and other communications users that would result from each proposal.”⁴⁵ With respect to circuit audits, the *NPRM* attempts a cost-benefit analysis, noting that the Bureau “found that uniform use of regular circuit audits likely would result in a decreased mortality risk nationwide.”⁴⁶ Indeed, the *NPRM* asks the critical question of “how likely is it that the incremental benefits of circuit audits would outweigh the costs...?”⁴⁷ The *NPRM* does not contain any cost-benefit analysis for any of the other proposed reliability and resiliency measures.

An appropriate cost-benefit analysis is an essential step before any new regulatory mandates are adopted. 9-1-1 service providers have invested substantially in their 9-1-1

⁴² *NPRM*, 28 FCC Rcd at 3443 ¶ 70 (footnote omitted).

⁴³ VZ at p. 24.

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ *NPRM*, *supra*, at 3422 ¶ 17.

⁴⁶ *Id.* at 3433 ¶ 43.

⁴⁷ *Id.* at 3433-34 ¶ 43.

networks and these networks have a high degree of reliability. The *NPRM*'s proposals to improve the robustness and resiliency of the 9-1-1 network would be costly to implement, with many 9-1-1 service providers commenting that the actual costs of compliance would be substantially higher than estimated by the FCC.⁴⁸ Assuming that an accurate cost of compliance could be determined, it is still necessary to examine the tangible public benefits of each proposed regulatory mandate to determine whether the cost is justified. In the case of regular circuit audits, while they would arguably make the 9-1-1 network more robust, there is no evidence showing a direct link between regular circuit audits (or other increased investment in the 9-1-1 network as proposed in the *NPRM*) and saved lives.

As observed by AT&T, the *Derecho Report* did not describe any instance where a person suffered harm because of failed or delayed 9-1-1 services.⁴⁹ The *NPRM* provides the results of a study of the public benefits of more accurate 9-1-1 location information, but improving location information is not at issue here. Evidence of tangible public benefits resulting from the reliability and resiliency measures proposed in the *NPRM* is conspicuously absent. Before costly, burdensome regulatory mandates are adopted, the public benefit of those mandates should be more fully examined so as to justify their cost. The working group discussed in Section II. could be charged with this task to ensure that these costs are appropriately justified.

VI. A FEDERAL FUNDING MECHANISM SHOULD BE EXPLORED TO SUPPORT THE COST OF NEW 9-1-1 RELIABILITY AND RESILIENCY MEASURES

To the extent the FCC adopts new rules to improve the reliability and resiliency of 9-1-1 service, it should consider whether a federal funding mechanism would be appropriate to support and facilitate prompt implementation of those rules. The Commission has a long history of

⁴⁸ See, e.g., VZ at pp. 11-12; ATT at pp. 24-25.

⁴⁹ ATT at pp. 25-26.

ensuring that the public has access to a state-of-the-art, reliable, and resilient 9-1-1 communications system. Reliable and resilient 9-1-1 networks provide a public benefit to all citizens in times of need. Some of the measures proposed in the *NPRM* are extremely burdensome and costly. If such measures are mandated, it would be appropriate to consider whether the public should contribute to the cost of these measures in light of the public benefits they would confer.

VII. CONCLUSION

CenturyLink is committed to public safety and appreciates the opportunity to file these reply comments concerning whether additional 9-1-1 reliability and resiliency measures are warranted in the wake of the derecho. The Commission should ensure that providers retain the flexibility to tailor their 9-1-1 reliability and resiliency practices to the unique needs of their individual networks. Rather than merely recasting best practices as prescriptive rules, the FCC should convene a working group of interested stakeholders from the public and private sectors to develop a core set of practices which could, if appropriate, be certified to the FCC. This process would facilitate the reasoned and detailed consideration of proposed practices together with

important related issues such as the cost and tangible public interest benefits those proposed practices would yield.

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