

Nneka Ezenwa Chiazor
Executive Director
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December 2, 2013

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Ex Parte

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Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Improving 9-1-1 Reliability, PS Docket No. 13-75; Reliability and Continuity of Communications Networks, Including Broadband Technologies, PS Docket No. 11-60

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On November 27, 2013, Nneka Chiazor, Kevin Green, and Gregory Romano of Verizon held a conference call with Daniel Alvarez, legal advisor to Chairman Wheeler, and separately with Michael Connelly, Priya Shrinivasan, and David Simpson of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, to discuss the pending Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in the above referenced dockets.

At the meeting, we outlined our understanding of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau's ("Bureau") proposal for improving 9-1-1 reliability. Our understanding is that the Bureau proposed establishing a certification program for 911 service providers centered on a core set of practices relating to 911 circuit diversity, network monitoring, and back-up power for central offices serving Public Safety Answering Points ("PSAPs").

We explained that any such certification program should give a 911 service provider the flexibility to certify that it is conforming to a specific practice; or if it is not conforming, what alternative actions, if any, the provider is undertaking. This approach would help ensure that a 911 service provider would have the necessary flexibility to develop and maintain a resilient 911 system.

We asserted that departing from this approach – e.g., by ordering compliance with specific practices or delegating authority to the Bureau to mandate particular actions on a case-by-case basis – would not work for 911 resiliency, particularly when 911 providers have a variety of network configurations, assets, and practices. Prescriptive mandates would impede 911 providers' flexibility to prepare for and respond to disasters, thus interfering with the Commission's policy of ensuring the resiliency of 911 services. Providers must retain the flexibility to take rapid, decisive action, without being subject to regulatory second-guessing, prior consultation, or a potential enforcement action. Technology and the associated service-disrupting threats change far too quickly for mandated practices to keep up. Mandated practices would also be an impediment to the development and deployment of innovative measures to enhance network resiliency.

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Along the same lines, flexibility is necessary with respect to any practices related to periodic assessments of network assets or circuit configurations. Because there may be occasions when the assessments propose certain remedial measures, providers should have the flexibility to prioritize and schedule those measures based on critical importance to 911 network resiliency. The provider should be able to certify to the Commission what those remediation plans are, but remediation schedules should not be dictated by the Commission or the Bureau.

Pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the Commission's rules, a copy of this letter is being filed via ECFS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Neeka Chazor".