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LAURA E. EVANS, ESQ.

November 14, 2013

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
 Chairman, The Federal Communications Commission
 445 12th Street SW
 Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

As county commissioners and overseers of the county's 9-1-1 center, we know that every second matters in a crisis. From the time that a call to 9-1-1 is placed to the dispatch of first responders, every second is maximized to ensure critical care is rendered as quickly as possible.

As you may know, more families are living without landline phones. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) estimates that as many as 70 percent of emergency calls are being made from wireless phones. Calls from households, apartment buildings, and crowded public places are originating from mobile devices with exponential regularity. However, the regulations for pinpointing emergency calls placed indoors from these devices have not truly caught up with technology.

In an emergency, the phones we hold in our hands are far inferior to the ones we have nailed to our walls. This should not be the case, and the FCC has an opportunity to change that. By establishing indoor location accuracy standards from wireless devices placing emergency calls, we can pair the portability and access of mobile phones with the reliability of landlines.

The technology to do this exists. In Dauphin County, we have technology that allows dispatchers to identify the location of callers. Many of our counterparts in other counties, however, are having difficulties with obtaining accurate location information from cell phone calls placed to 9-1-1. This is especially true for rural areas with intermittent cell phone coverage.

We urge you to address this important public safety matter with the FCC and recommend establishing location accuracy standards for wireless devices. In an emergency, every second counts. We can do a better job of ensuring all county 9-1-1 centers receive accurate and timely data from mobile devices.

Sincerely,

Jeff Haste
 Chairman

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