

**Written Statement of
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Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
Before the
Committee on Energy and Commerce,
Subcommittee on Communications, Technology and the Internet
U.S. House of Representatives
September 17, 2009**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Stearns and members of the Subcommittee, it is a pleasure to appear before you today to discuss the important issues facing the Federal Communications Commission. First, it is a privilege to Chair the Commission and to work with such an exceptional team of Commissioners. I hold the highest regard and esteem for Commissioners Copps, McDowell, Clyburn, and Baker and have every confidence that together we can make the FCC work for all Americans.

While I arrived at the FCC only a couple of months ago, I have tried to hit the ground running, seeking to revitalize and retool the agency.

First, I have begun articulating strategic priorities. I've spoken to my colleagues on the Commission and to agency staff, in groups large and small, about these priorities. They include fostering investment and innovation, promoting competition, and protecting and empowering consumers, children, and families. We have started work on all of these priorities.

National Broadband Plan

With respect to broadband, the Commission announced at its July meeting an intensive effort to develop a detailed broadband plan over the next seven months. I am especially grateful to Commissioners Copps and McDowell for their dedicated work on broadband before my arrival and look forward to working with them – and Commissioners Clyburn and Baker – on this important effort.

I believe that broadband is our generation's major infrastructure challenge. Earlier generations faced, and rose to, similar challenges, with railroads, highways, telephones, and electricity – networks that have connected Americans, served as a platform for commerce, and improved the quality of life for all Americans. The FCC's plan should ensure that our country has a broadband infrastructure appropriate to the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

In developing the broadband plan, the FCC is conducting a data-driven process with unparalleled opportunities for public participation. On August 6 we began an ongoing series of public workshops on a broad range of issues relating to broadband, holding over twenty workshops to date. We have launched a website – Broadband.Gov – that has helped open up the public dialogue around the broadband plan to more citizens and new

voices from around the country, including rural and inner cities, small businesses, and state and local governments. Broadband.Gov provides schedules and information about our broadband initiative and is a place for all stakeholders to give us input and comments on our progress to date.

Our Broadband team has also brought other new and innovative methods to fostering a public dialogue to the FCC. In addition to our first ever public workshops, we have helped Americans outside of Washington participate in the workshops using multimedia tools such as interactive webcasting and live panelist testimony via live tele-presence. To date, we have had over 1,100 in room attendees and over 4,600 online attendees. Other new media uses designed to increase public participation include:

- **“Blogband”** – The official blog of the national broadband plan and the FCC’s first ever blog. This is where all stakeholders can hear from experts at the FCC and provide comments that will be inserted into the public record.
- **Ideascale** – The FCC recently launched this crowd-sourcing platform. Crowd-sourcing allows participants to discuss, evaluate and rank ideas, and will be especially useful in reaching stakeholders outside of Washington, DC.
- **FCC.gov/Connect** – The Commission is connecting to other forms of social media. At FCC.gov/Connect, stakeholders can find dozens of platforms to learn about the FCC and participate in FCC processes.

We are at the very early stages of this work but thousands of citizens have already connected to the FCC through the use of technology. We are using these and other tools to reach out to all Americans because all Americans are stakeholders in our work. Broadband is an agency-wide effort, involving virtually every Bureau and Office.

Commission Inquiries – Innovation, Investment, Competition and Consumers

Last month, at the August agenda meeting, the FCC addressed the key topics of innovation, investment, competition, and consumers. These values lie at the core of the FCC’s mission; they are essential to ensuring that communications in the 21st century will serve as an enduring engine of economic growth for our nation and improve the lives of all Americans.

The Wireless Innovation and Investment “Notice of Inquiry” focuses on the Commission’s particular responsibility for managing spectrum—a unique and scarce national resource. It recognizes the vital importance of innovators and entrepreneurs to the work of the Commission. Specifically, it requests inputs and ideas for how the FCC can best maximize investment and innovation in the mobile industry. The inquiry seeks to ascertain what actions the Commission currently undertakes that perhaps it should cease, and what new steps can be taken to fulfill strategic objectives of fostering investment and innovation for our country.

The goal of the Wireless Competition Notice of Inquiry is to build a solid, analytic foundation for predictable, fact-based competition policy in the wireless sector. This process will continue with the other competition reports the agency is responsible for preparing.

Finally, the goal of the Consumer Information and Disclosure Notice of Inquiry is to allow the Commission to assess whether consumers have adequate information to make informed buying decisions. Access to information in readily understandable formats is essential to ensuring that the competitive marketplace works and that consumers can choose communications services that will meet their needs and not lead to surprise charges.

Public Safety

Critical steps also have been taken to further another key FCC priority – public safety. This is an issue that I consider to be a top priority.

This month marks the 8th anniversary of the horrific attacks of 9/11, which dramatically changed the way we think about homeland security. Like so many others, I was in Manhattan that day, not far from the World Trade Center, and family members were even closer to Ground Zero. We also just marked the anniversary of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and recognize that still more work needs to be done.

In fact, one of my first actions as FCC Chairman was to direct the Commission's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau to conduct a 30-day, top-to-bottom review of the agency's state of readiness for major public emergencies. I am fortunate that Rear Admiral (ret.) Jamie Barnett, our new Chief of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, led that review. Admiral Barnett brings to the FCC 32 years of distinguished leadership and service in the United States Navy, and he thoroughly understands the importance of collaboration, preparation, and foresight in homeland security and emergency response.

On September 8, I released the results of the 30-day review, and I am pleased to share some of its findings with this Committee. The FCC's main mission is to ensure continuous operations and reconstitution of critical communications systems and services during and following emergencies. To accomplish that mission, I want to outline briefly four key areas for improvement, as noted in the report.

The report emphasizes the importance of the FCC's outreach efforts in maintaining strong partnerships with federal, state, tribal, and local governments, the public safety community, and communications service providers. By working closely with our partners, the FCC can identify, in advance, the communications needs of law enforcement agencies, fire departments, and hospitals so that when an emergency arises, key lines of communication will remain open or be quickly restored through a variety of means.

The report recommends measures aimed at ensuring that the FCC can proactively

respond to public safety communications needs, and communicate accurate and timely information to the public, even if the Commission's internal operations are disrupted. These measures will help make sure the American public and first responders can get the emergency alerts that they need, when they need them.

Another key role for the FCC is ensuring the security of the nation's communications networks. To better fulfill that role, the Public Safety Bureau has recommended improvements in our network analysis capabilities.

And, finally, education and training. It is one thing to have an emergency response plan, but it is meaningless if you cannot execute it. We will continue to conduct meaningful training exercises for all FCC employees.

Overall, while confirming that the FCC stands ready to respond to communications emergencies, the report reminds us that the agency must continuously strive to maximize its readiness, to ensure that it is prepared to meet its vital mission in the digital age, and to work toward helping our country's first responders deploy 21st century technologies in support of their operational requirements.

We have set an aggressive schedule to implement the report's recommendations and it is important that the agency has adequate resources to meet the challenges of its critical role in public safety and homeland security. In some cases, this may require investing in additional resources and expertise at the agency.

FCC Reform

Along with starting work on our strategic priorities, we are also working towards the FCC becoming a model for excellence in government. The American people deserve an FCC that efficiently and effectively achieves the goals that Congress has set out for it; encourages and facilitates participation by all stakeholders; and is data-driven in its decision-making. We have made some good strides in the last two months.

One of my first acts as Chairman was to appoint a Special Counsel for FCC reform. My new General Counsel and Managing Director will focus on reform and efficiency as well, performing a thorough review of the FCC's existing processes and making recommendations for improvement. The reform agenda includes:

- A review of our public safety readiness;
- A review of our systems and processes for data collection, analysis and dissemination;
- Improvements in our licensing, comment and complaint filing systems;
- Modernizing our information infrastructure to ensure the agency functions effectively and efficiently;
- Moving our workforce forward by streamlining our operations, greening the agency, and providing leadership development and training;

- Improving our institutional processes by better management of workflow, and reviewing our rules and policies to reduce backlogs; and
- Reviewing our financial operations.

I am far along with a series of meetings with every Bureau and Office at the Commission, in which I have expressed my commitment to listening to employees' ideas for how to improve our work. In addition to holding these in-person discussions, I have launched an internal online forum where employees can submit their ideas for improvement and reform. On the site, employees are involved in hundreds of conversations about how to improve the agency.

I am also committed to soliciting public feedback and to upgrading our website – one of the main ways in which our agency interacts with the public. We will focus on improving navigation, search capabilities, and the accessibility of information on our site. And we will be launching a section of the site – Reboot.Fcc.Gov – where citizens can offer their ideas for FCC reform. Our goal is an inclusive process through which the public can be involved in the work of the Commission. As I mentioned earlier, our process for developing the National Broadband Plan will be the most inclusive in the agency's history.

To ensure that the FCC is data-driven in its decision-making, I have directed the FCC's Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Analysis to conduct a top-to-bottom review of the FCC's systems and processes for data collection, processing, analysis, and dissemination. As the nation's expert agency on communications, the FCC must have access to, and base its decisions on, data that are robust, reliable, and relevant. The review I have ordered will address whether any new data should be collected, whether any existing data reporting requirements should be streamlined or eliminated, and whether existing technological platforms can be modernized to make our use of data more effective and efficient. It is looking at the over 400 major data collections that OMB has approved under the Paperwork Reduction Act.

As an ancillary to our data review, we are also assessing the database and communications infrastructure of the Commission. An initial review strongly suggests that a significant upgrade will be warranted to bring the Commission into the 21st century. My experts tell me our website and database infrastructure is many years out of date. An upgrade will permit the Commission and its staff to function much more efficiently and facilitate public use of the agency's website. Moreover, we will also look at our licensing, comment and complaint filing systems to see whether they can be improved. We have launched an initiative that will combine all the functions of many of our current licensing applications, including the Universal Licensing System, Consolidated Data Base System, Cable Operations and Licensing System, International Bureau Frequency System, Experimental Licensing System, Antenna Structure Registration, Canadian Co-Channel Serial Coordination System, and Commission Registration System into a single consolidated system. The new consolidated system will give the public a consistent interface and will standardize business practices across Bureaus and Offices.

We also plan to update our Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS), which allows consumers to submit, research, and print comments filed with the agency. The system is 10 years old and in dire need of an upgrade. The improved ECFS is easier to navigate, has greater search capabilities and allows the filing of comments into multiple proceedings with a single submission, and allows filers to learn of new comments matching criteria via RSS feeds, among other enhancements.

Finally, I have assembled an extraordinary team of individuals to help with FCC reform and with the many other challenges before us. My team includes top private-sector talent as well as individuals with many years of experience at the FCC, in other parts of government, and in non-profits. And because interdisciplinary collaboration is crucial to the FCC's success, our staff includes not only lawyers, but also individuals from many other disciplines. It is also increasingly clear that although the Commission has many experts in traditional fields, we are lacking staff in certain key disciplines, including engineers, technologists, and economists. When possible, we have also looked to experts outside the agency to challenge our thinking, beginning with partnerships with leading research institutions at major universities to conduct additional research on broadband issues.

I have also learned a few things during my brief tenure as Chairman. For one, repeating relentlessly is sometimes necessary. I do not support reinstatement of the Fairness Doctrine either through a front door or a back door. I believe deeply in the First Amendment and oppose any effort to censor or impose speech on the basis of political viewpoint or opinion.

Revitalizing and retooling the FCC will be a marathon, not a sprint. But while I cannot promise instant results, I can assure you of my commitment to institutionalizing change and to making the FCC a 21st-century agency for the information age – one that fights for consumers and families, and fosters investment and innovation, through fair, participatory, and data-driven processes.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.