



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

August 23, 2016

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Schumer:

Thank you for your letter regarding the implementation of text-to-911 and Next Generation 911 (NG911). As you correctly point out, recent events such as the shootings in San Bernardino and Orlando underscore the need to ensure that our nation's 911 system keeps up with the latest advances in communications technology. I also share your view that more is needed to accelerate the nationwide deployment of text-to-911 and NG911. Replacing today's 911 system with a broadband-enabled, IP-based 911 network will offer more accessibility, resilience, functionality, innovation potential, and competitive opportunities than is presently possible.

With respect to deployment of text-to-911, it is important to note at the outset that the decision by individual Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) as to whether and when they will support text-to-911 is a state or local decision, not a Commission decision. I am pleased that to date, over 600 PSAPs, covering approximately 20 percent of the U.S. population, now support text-to-911, and that many more jurisdictions throughout the nation are in the planning or implementation stages. We are working closely with state and local 911 authorities, including in New York City and elsewhere in New York State, to encourage additional text-to-911 deployment and to assist such efforts wherever possible. This will continue to be a priority for the Commission because the life-saving capabilities of text-to-911 have already been proven in instances where people in need were able to contact 911 by text when a voice call was not possible or would have put the caller in danger.

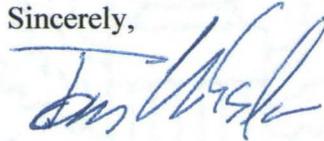
The Commission is committed to doing everything in our power to quickly transition the nation to NG911. In addition to requiring wireless carriers to support text-to-911, we have acted to improve 911 location accuracy and enhance the reliability of legacy, transitional, and NG911 networks.

While these steps represent progress, I agree that we collectively can do more to help the nation's PSAPs overcome the funding, planning, and operational challenges that are stalling the transition to NG911, and I will continue to be an aggressive champion towards that end. In your letter, you urge the Commission to convene all the appropriate stakeholders to identify barriers to NG911 implementation and ways to speed up the process. We have already begun this task by convening our PSAP Task Force, which has brought together many of the nation's leading

experts on 911 and NG911, including practicing 911 professionals from state and local government, as well as representatives from public safety organizations, industry, consumer groups, and the federal government. Earlier this year, the Task Force issued a comprehensive report containing recommendations to help PSAPs migrate to Next Generation architecture, develop sustainable funding models, and provide cybersecurity protection to the 911 system as it transitions to IP-based technology. The Task Force is continuing to refine its recommendations and we are committed to working with all stakeholders to help implement them. In particular, we intend to expand our engagement to include local and state government leaders, including state legislators and governors, who are essential to making the NG911 transition happen in their states and communities.

As I have repeatedly noted during the last year, Congress has the unique ability to make the transition to NG911 a national priority and to provide the means to achieve it. I hope that we can work together to make NG911 universally available to all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line above the first few letters.

Tom Wheeler