



Ajit Pai
Commissioner

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, DC 20554

March 11, 2015

Denise Turner Roth
Acting Administrator
General Services Administration
1800 F Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20405-0001

Dear Acting Administrator Roth,

In 2012, Congress required the Administrator of General Services to complete a report on 911 dialing from federal buildings. In particular, the Spectrum Act states that the Administrator “shall issue a report to Congress identifying the 9-1-1 capabilities of the multi-line telephone system [MLTS] in use by all Federal agencies in all Federal buildings and properties” no later than 270 days after the enactment of the Act.¹ The Act was signed into law on February 22, 2012, which means the deadline for the report was November 18, 2012. I am writing to inquire about the status of that report.

As you may know, in January 2014, I started an inquiry into the status of 911 dialing at properties that use multi-line telephone systems.² Like many others, I was moved to act when I learned about the tragic death of Kari Rene Hunt Dunn in a Marshall, Texas hotel room. While Kari was being attacked, her daughter tried calling 911 four times, but her call for help never went through because the hotel’s multi-line telephone system required guests to dial a “9” before calling 911.

Although the inquiry revealed that many properties that use MLTS required callers to dial a “9,” “8,” or some other access code before they could get an outside line, it also showed that there were no technical barriers to eliminating the access code requirement for 911 calls in all or nearly all cases. Moreover, it often cost little or no money for properties to make these changes. Indeed, multi-line telephone systems can be configured to allow both 911 and 9-911 dialing. I recently provided an update on the substantial progress that is being made to fix this problem.³

But there is more work to be done. For example, it appears that the phone systems at many federal buildings and properties are not configured to allow direct 911 dialing. The Federal Communications Commission, where I work, is one of those. When you pick up the phone and dial 911 at the FCC, this is what you hear: “Your call cannot be completed as dialed. Please consult your directory and call again or ask your operator for assistance. This is a recording.”

¹ Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, Pub. L. No. 112-96, 126 Stat. 156, Title VI § 6504(a) (2012). The Act states that the Administrator of General Services shall issue the report in conjunction with the 9-1-1 Implementation Coordination Office. *See id.* § 6503.

² *See* Statement of FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai on the Importance of Connecting Americans to Emergency Personnel Whenever They Dial 911 (Jan. 13, 2014), <http://go.usa.gov/9DxJ>; *see also* Remarks of Commissioner Ajit Pai at the 9-1-1 Goes to Washington Conference (Mar. 24, 2014), <http://go.usa.gov/9DjA>; Summary of Commissioner Ajit Pai’s Remarks at the 9-1-1 Goes to Washington Conference (Mar. 24, 2014), <http://go.usa.gov/9DDY>; Statement of FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai Regarding the Ongoing Inquiry Into Consumers’ Ability to Reach Emergency Personnel Whenever They Dial 911 (June 24, 2014), <http://go.usa.gov/3aXQk>.

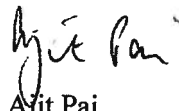
³ *See* Remarks of FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai on Connecting Americans to Emergency Personnel Whenever They Dial 911 (Jan. 23, 2015), <http://go.usa.gov/SQ5k>; *see also* Summary of FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai’s Report on the Progress Being Made to Ensure that Dialing 911 Always Works (Jan. 23, 2015), <http://go.usa.gov/SQ5P>.

This is not acceptable. Federal agency employees and visitors deserve the same direct access to emergency responders as those who work and visit private facilities. Indeed, at a recent hearing before the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, Ranking Member Anna Eshoo noted that the FCC requires callers to dial 9-911 and asked the FCC witness "Are you going to fix that? Are you going to get rid of the 9?"⁴ Ranking Member Eshoo explained that it "really needs to be upgraded," as the FCC "should be the example not only for the rest of the federal government but for the entire country."⁵ Congressman John Shimkus made similar points, stating that "Government should try to lead" on direct 911 dialing, as "the return on investment over time . . . just by leading by example could be very helpful."⁶

In light of all this, I would like to know whether GSA has completed its report on the 911 capabilities of MLTS in federal buildings. If so, could you please provide me with a copy of that report? If not, could you please apprise me of GSA's plans and timeline for doing so?

I would appreciate a response to this letter by March 24, 2015. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 418-2000. Thank you for your assistance in helping to ensure that whenever someone in a federal building calls 911, he or she will connect with emergency personnel.

Sincerely,



Ajit Pai
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission

⁴ Hearing before the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology of the United States House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce, "Reauthorization of the Federal Communications Commission: The FCC's FY 2016 Budget Request" Video at 38:18-39:13 (Mar. 4, 2015), <http://go.usa.gov/3avUJ>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.* at 48:25-50:00.