



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 21, 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 vulnerabilities in the Nation's 911 system. I share your concern about the need to secure the physical and logical infrastructure of the nation's 911 call centers, also known as Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs). The Ben Gurion University's research paper that you cited in your letter presents a compelling case study of the theoretical risks that PSAPs must be prepared to protect against, detect, and respond to in order to ensure that members of the public have uninterrupted access to 911.

The Nation's PSAPs are at a crossroads as the Next Generation 911 transition challenges them to depart from a reliance on legacy, analog systems to state of the art digital, IP-based systems. The End of Life period for legacy technologies can be the most dangerous for ensuring cybersecurity of information technology and communications infrastructure. NG911 can, however, enable PSAPs to manage incoming 911 calls effectively and to institute robust call routing policies to better handle and deflect disruptive denial of service attacks.

In fact, earlier this year, the FCC's Task Force on Optimal PSAP Architecture (Task Force), an expert advisory panel, adopted a comprehensive set of recommendations and guidance that could help accelerate the nation's transition to NG911, including methods to protect PSAPs effectively and efficiently against the real and expanding threat of cyber-attack as they transition from the circuit-switched world. Later this year, the Task Force will deliver a detailed set of recommendations regarding establishing Emergency Communications Cybersecurity Centers to conduct inspection and filtering of PSAP call traffic. I anticipate that the Task Force's recommendations will serve as the foundation for further concerted industry top-to-bottom investigation of the how to protect PSAPs from cyber and denial of service attacks. We have and will continue to work closely with industry and our agency partners to identify, mitigate and where possible reduce cybersecurity risk.

In multiple testimonies before Congress, I have suggested that the FCC is close to the limit of what it can do to facilitate NG911 and called on Congress to take action to create national enablers to accelerate the transition to NG911, lower its cost to PSAPs, and institute critical cybersecurity protections.

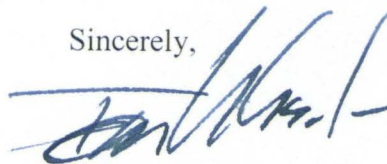
We need coordinated action and leadership at both the state and national level to guarantee that our 911 emergency systems remain secure and available to provide services

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around the clock. Congress has the unique ability to make the transition to NG911 a national priority and to provide the means to achieve it.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", with a horizontal line drawn through the middle of the signature.

Tom Wheeler

