



Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20554

National Communications System  
Arlington, VA 22204



January 28, 2003

Mr. Terry Peters  
Executive Director  
National Emergency Number Association  
422 Beecher Road  
Columbus, Ohio 43230

Dear Mr. Peters:

In light of the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the recognition that real and serious threats exist to the security of our nation and our nation's citizens has prompted the federal government to reassess and reorganize many of its processes and resources to deal effectively with threats to the nation's homeland security. We are writing on behalf of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Communications System (NCS), both of which view homeland security as one of the central challenges facing the government and the telecommunications industry today.

The FCC and NCS are engaged in a joint effort to ensure that the policies established by both agencies maximize the effectiveness of the many efforts being made to make our nation safe. Among the key areas that we have targeted are the nation's emergency telecommunications programs. These programs are essential in ensuring effective communications within the nation at all times, and are fundamental to the well-being of our citizens and institutions.

The focus of this letter is the Telecommunications Service Priority or TSP program. The enclosed brochure explains the basic purpose and key aspects of this program. TSP provides for priority restoration of pre-designated critical telecommunications circuits in the event the circuits are damaged or destroyed. The program has been in operation since 1988 and has helped in the telecommunications restoration process in many disasters. Most notably, the TSP program played a crucial role in the restoration of telecommunications services to Lower Manhattan following the attacks on the World Trade Center by prioritizing the restoration efforts of the telecommunications carriers. Unfortunately, the events of September 11 also showed that many circuits critical to restoration of essential services did not have TSP designations and that we, therefore, need to encourage greater participation in TSP.

We believe your organization can play an important role in helping us to improve participation by key organizations in the TSP program. Specifically, we seek your assistance in connection with our current outreach efforts aimed at the public safety answering point (PSAP) administrators. PSAP administrators provide services that are essential to the protection of life and property of American citizens, and we believe they should avail themselves of the benefits of the TSP program. As explained in the attached memorandum, however, we are concerned that many PSAP administrators may not be aware of the importance of participating in the TSP program or may over-estimate the cost of participation.

Because of your association's expertise and knowledge of the emergency telecommunications field, we believe that your assistance in contacting the PSAP administrators and providing them with information on how the TSP program works, and why they should seriously consider participating in the program, would be of enormous help in assuring that critical communications capabilities are available when needed.

We would greatly appreciate your help and would be happy to discuss this matter with you in more detail. To that end, experts from our staff will be calling you in the next few days to discuss the role that you can play in helping us in our outreach efforts.

Sincerely,

Edmond J. Thomas  
Chief, Office of Engineering & Technology  
Federal Communications Commission

Brenton C. Greene  
Deputy Manager  
National Communications System

Attachment  
Enclosure