

**REMARKS OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS
COMMUNICATIONS SECURITY, RELIABILITY AND
INTEROPERABILITY COUNCIL
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Good morning and thank you all for being here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your kind words and thank you especially for convening this important first meeting of a very important group.

I know we can say that about a lot of committees (how important they are) and most of them are, but it's especially true in this case and with this committee. The safety of the people is always the highest obligation of government and the first duty of the public servant. I worked for a U.S. Senator, the great Fritz Hollings of South Carolina, who drilled that into me for 15 years—maybe he had to keep repeating because I was a slow learner, but I think it was really because he lived that axiom every day.

I commend Chairman Genachowski for bringing us here today and for getting the committee up-and-running—something I also made a priority while I was Acting Chair earlier this year. It's good to see the organizing work behind us now so the real work can begin. I have spoken to the Chairman numerous times already about public safety, and I know he brings huge priority to it and will provide this committee with the tools it needs so it can do its job and to help us to do ours.

I know my Commission colleagues share this commitment. I've talked to each of them about it and each brings valuable experience and perspective to the issues attending public safety. We have some previous progress to build on. In the last Commission, working with then-Chairman Kevin Martin, we were able to create a separate bureau at the FCC, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, to focus on ensuring that communications networks stay up and running and to work on plans for building an interoperable broadband public safety network. My colleagues also agreed with me on establishing a clearinghouse where experts from around the country could come to share experiences and learn from what others had done when it comes to building out public safety networks—what folks had done right but also what they'd done not-so-well, so that other public safety entities wouldn't waste time, money and effort going down wrong roads. This work not only continues—it is accelerating under the able leadership of our new Bureau Chief, Admiral Jamie Barnett. I am already impressed with the work he is doing to move us ahead on these crucial issues—and I commend our Chairman for recruiting him to the agency and for the high priority he has already demonstrated across the gamut of security issues. And the Admiral has a great staff of dedicated FCC public servants, with years of tremendous service, to help us meet our objectives.

Back to where I began—that's the safety of the people. We've got a long road still to travel. We could spend hours debating why we haven't made more progress—but none of us should be throwing stones. It's like the old Pogo line, "We have met the enemy—and it is us." We're over eight years out from 9/11 now—and over four years

beyond Hurricane Katrina—and our country is nowhere near where it should be in terms of being prepared for the next great disaster, be it man-made or from the not-always-benign hand of Mother Nature. On this day particularly, December 7th, we should appreciate how swiftly harm can befall us. Yes, I think in some respects we've moved ahead, but I think most public safety experts agree that there's more to be done than has yet been done. Many of us remember the stern warnings of *The 9/11 Commission Report*. Well, many of the shortfalls identified in that report still remain. And, as a country, the farther away we get without another terror attack, the more hurricane-less summers we have, the more folks become complacent. Most of us are guilty of that, I suppose. And it's not good. But it is **government** that must lead the way. Not acting by itself, but working closely with the private sector, public safety, all the stakeholders—and when it comes to public safety, we're all stakeholders. It's all of our jobs—industry, government and the public safety community, working together—to do this job. As I have said before, when disaster strikes again, we don't want anyone to be able to say that we in the public sector or you in the private sector were asleep at the switch. If disaster struck tomorrow, to be perfectly frank, I don't think there would be a patient reaction from the American people—nor should there be.

I have worked with many of you in the predecessor councils to this one—the NRIC and the MSRIC. Now they are essentially combined—reflecting the reality of the convergence we are seeing across technologies and communications platforms. And, I know we can count on you. Thank you, in particular, to Chris Fischer of APCO and Bill Smith of AT&T for co-chairing our new CSRIC. We are fortunate to have them leading this council.

I recognize that this is only your first meeting as the CSRIC—but since time is not our friend when it comes to security and public safety, I will be looking for solid recommendations from you on a host of issues. Soon. There are many public safety issues out there—next-generation public safety and commercial communications networks; cyber-security; E-911 reliability, CAP-based Emergency Alert Services; prioritization of vital communications during a pandemic—to name just a few. I imagine you'll have a clearer idea of where your initial focus will be by the time you leave here today.

The work of this Council is all the more timely in light of the charge this Commission has from Congress and the President to develop a National Broadband Plan to get high-speed, high-value broadband out to all our citizens. It's the central infrastructure challenge of the first half of the Twenty-first century—and its success relies on that infrastructure being secure, reliable and interoperable. We're going to be hugely dependent on broadband in this century, so making it robust and reliable is an enormous challenge. But our country knows how to respond to great challenge. You know, in all the great infrastructure challenges coursing back through our history—whether the building roads or transcontinental railroads or the electrification of rural America—we have always found a way to bring the public and private sectors together to get the job done. Broadband infrastructure—and the safety that must secure it—is no exception. Each of you and your organizations bring experience, knowledge and

judgment to ensuring the security, reliability and interoperability of the broadband networks the country is building. If we don't have that, we will have really short-changed both the infrastructure and our citizens.

I do have one other particular request. Make sure what you're doing here is known widely throughout the organizations you work for. If you run that company, it's easier to make that happen. If you don't, make sure your leadership is thoroughly invested in this, that it knows what you are doing in some detail, and is committed to this, because the things we all have to do to meet our goals will require real buy-in and, no doubt, the commitment of significant resources. Not just public resources, but private, too. The job you're doing here is important; make sure your organizations know that, feel that, and act accordingly.

Let me stop talking so you can start working. I look forward to working with you in the months ahead. My door is always open and my staff and I both understand the import of what you are trying to accomplish. Again, I know this is a serious commitment you have made, that there are lots of other things calling upon your time and talents, and that you're making a sacrifice by being part of this. For that my colleagues and I are truly grateful.