



December 6, 2012

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Commissioner McDowell
Commissioner Clyburn
Commissioner Rosenworcel
Commissioner Pai
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Re: In the Matter of Facilitating the Deployment of Text-to-911 and Other Next Generation 911 Applications, PS Docket No. 11-153; and In the Matter of Framework for Next Generation 911 Deployment, PS Docket No. 10-255.

Dear Chairman Genachowski and Commissioners McDowell, Clyburn, Rosenworcel and Pai:

The undersigned signatory text-message service providers have agreed to voluntarily offer their subscribers text-based emergency communication services, in accordance with the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions (“ATIS”) industry standard solution (currently expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2013), to requesting public safety answering points (“PSAPs”). As a step towards a comprehensive Next Generation 9-1-1 (“NG9-1-1”) system, this voluntary framework for a text-to-9-1-1 solution provides near-term opportunities to meet the emergency communications needs of wireless subscribers who (currently) rely on SMS for everyday communications and individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired. This framework also accommodates the service providers’ need to respond to the rapid evolution of the telecommunications marketplace by deploying whatever successor technologies are deemed appropriate by the service provider to satisfy current and future requirements of the text-to-9-1-1 service.

This voluntary commitment reflects discussion with the signatories and public safety stakeholders, and is intended to reflect and incorporate much of the important work undertaken by public safety, disabilities and industry stakeholders through the Emergency Access Advisory Committee (“EAAC”). As the wireless provider signatories have advised the Commission and the EAAC, SMS is a store-and-forward messaging technology that was never designed nor deployed to provide any time-sensitive, mission-critical service.¹

¹ *Facilitating the Deployment of Text-to-911 and Other Next Generation Applications, Framework for Next Generation 911 Deployment*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 11-134 ¶ 53 (Sept. 22, 2011); *see also*, *Text Messages in a PSAP Environment*, APCO Emerging Technologies (rel July 30, 2012) available at <http://psc.apcointl.org/wp-content/uploads/APCO-Emerging-Tech-Text-to-911-Final.pdf> and *Texting to 9-1-1: Examining the Design and Limitations of SMS*, 4G Americas (October 2010) available at <http://www.4gamericas.org/documents/SMS%20to%20911%20White%20Paper%20Final%20October%202010.pdf>, but *see*, FCC EAAC, Resolution regarding Text Messaging to 911 (adopted March 30 2012) (recommending Text Messaging to 9-1-1, at a minimum, via SMS); and Presentation of EAAC Working Group 1, Text-to-911 Solutions to 911 Interim to NG911 (Sept. 14, 2012) (outlining key assumptions about Pre-NG911 Interim Text to 911).

Consistent with these parameters, this commitment is being offered through the provision of an interim “best-efforts service” to meet the near term objective of providing a text-based emergency communications until the comprehensive NG9-1-1 system (e.g. ESINet) is developed, deployed and adopted by the wireless industry, public safety community and public.

The terms of this commitment cover only the text-messaging services provided by the signatories. They do not extend to text-messaging applications provided by third parties..

The signatories make the following voluntary commitments:

- 1) Text-to-9-1-1 service would be made available by May 15, 2014, although carriers may choose to implement such a service prior to that date. Once a carrier begins offering a Text-to-9-1-1 solution, valid PSAP requests for Text-to-9-1-1 service will be implemented within a reasonable amount of time of receiving such request, not to exceed six months. A request for service will be considered valid if, at the time the request is made: a) the requesting PSAP represents that it is technically ready to receive 9-1-1 text messages in the format requested; and b) the appropriate local or State 9-1-1 service governing authority has specifically authorized the PSAP to accept and, by extension, the signatory service provider to provide, text-to-9-1-1 service (and such authorization is not subject to dispute).
- 2) Beginning no later than July 1, 2013, the four signatory service providers will voluntarily provide quarterly progress reports to the FCC, NENA, and APCO summarizing the status of the deployment of a national Text-to-9-1-1 service capability. Once a service provider is able to deploy service for capable PSAPs on a national basis, it would no longer be required to provide these status reports.
- 3) Consistent with the draft ATIS Standard for Interim Text-to-9-1-1 service, the PSAPs will select the format for how messages are to be delivered. Incremental costs for delivery of text messages (e.g. additional trunk groups to the PSAP’s premises required to support TTY delivery) will be the responsibility of the PSAP, as determined by individual analysis.
- 4) The signatory service providers will implement a ‘9-1-1’ short code that can be used by customers to send text messages to 9-1-1.
- 5) Before the deployment of Text-to-9-1-1, the signatory service providers will implement a bounce-back (auto-reply) message to alert subscribers attempting to text

an emergency message to instead dial 9-1-1 when Text-to-9-1-1 is unavailable in that area. The signatory service providers will implement the bounce-back (auto-reply) message by June 30, 2013.

- 6) The signatory service providers will meet these commitments independent of their ability to recover these associated costs from state or local governments.
- 7) The signatory service providers (whether individually or through a third party) will work with APCO, NENA, and the FCC to develop an outreach effort to set and manage consumer expectations regarding the availability/limitations of the Text-to-9-1-1 service (including when roaming) and the benefits of using voice calls to 9-1-1 whenever possible, and support APCO and NENA's effort to educate PSAPs on Text-to-9-1-1 generally.
- 8) A voluntary SMS-to-9-1-1 solution will be limited to the capabilities of the existing SMS service offered by a participating wireless service provider on the home wireless network to which a wireless subscriber originates an SMS message. SMS-to-9-1-1 will not be available to wireless subscribers roaming outside of their home wireless network. Each implementation of SMS-to-9-1-1 will be unique to the capabilities of each signatory service provider or its Gateway Service Provider.

Pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. § 1.1206, this letter is being electronically filed via ECFS with your office and a copy of this submission is being provided to the meeting attendees. Please direct any questions to the undersigned.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Terry Hall
APCO International

/s/ Charles W. McKee
Sprint Nextel

/s/ Robert W. Quinn, Jr.
AT&T

/s/ Kathleen O'Brien Ham
T-Mobile USA

/s/ Barbara Jaeger
NENA- The 9-1-1 Association

/s/ Kathleen Grillo
Verizon