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**Re: Notice of Ex Parte, PS Docket No. 21-479**

APCO submits this ex parte to recommend amendments to the Commission's draft Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on Facilitating Implementation of Next Generation 9-1-1 Services.<sup>1</sup> The NPRM explores important issues at a critical time for 9-1-1 authorities and emergency communications centers.

To ensure that the NPRM solicits useful insight into the proposals' potential impacts on emergency communications centers and the opportunity to support the transition to NG9-1-1, APCO proposes the following amendments (formatted in bold and underline) to paragraphs 24, 30, 41, 42, 43, and 51 of the item:

24. We seek comment on how to ensure that our proposal to require delivery of 911 calls in IP-based format would support interoperability in the NG911 environment, i.e., the ability to transfer 911 calls and related data from one PSAP to another or from one ESInet to another. **How should interoperability be defined, and how should it be demonstrated? Should originating service providers and covered 911 service providers be responsible for achieving interoperability, with no costs passed to PSAPs or 911 authorities?** Are there potential interoperability risks for PSAPs or 911 authorities associated with a requirement to deliver information in an IP-based format? If so, what are those risks and what steps should we take to address them? Should we specify that the IP-based format requested by 911 authorities and delivered by originating providers must meet specified criteria to support interoperability, e.g., by including a requirement that the format conform to commonly accepted standards? **To protect 911 authorities, should originating service providers and 911 service providers be responsible for the costs of testing connections and resolving compatibility issues with IP-based interfaces?** Are there other requirements or conditions we should apply to eliminate impediments to interoperability and support

<sup>1</sup> Facilitating Implementation of Next Generation 911 Services (NG911), PS Docket No. 21-479, *Draft Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, FCC-CIRC2306-01 (rel. May 18, 2023).

seamless transfer of 911 calls and data? **Should we specify that originating service providers' obligations to deliver calls in an IP-based format extends to the new types of "calls" expected for NG911, such as photos and video? Should we require 911 service providers to support interoperability, for example, by enabling the seamless transfer of 911 calls and related data between PSAPs served by different service providers?**

30. Our proposed rule would confirm 911 authorities' role in designating points for delivery of 911 calls in the NG911 environment, whether such delivery points are at the ESInet boundary, at individual PSAPs, or at other points in the network that allow emergency calls to be answered. We believe this approach would provide states with a uniform framework to manage NG911 transition costs and minimize time-consuming negotiations with providers. We seek comment on this proposal. Would it help to resolve state-level controversies regarding the delivery of 911 traffic in an NG911 environment? Should we take into consideration the number, location, or type of points of interconnection provided by the state? For example, should we require delivery of 911 traffic to point(s) designated by the 911 authority only if the points of interconnection meet certain criteria, e.g., the points of interconnection are located within the state to which 911 service is being provided, there are a specific number of points of interconnection per LATA, or the points of interconnection are able to receive traffic in specific formats (such as TDM or IP)? What would the benefits and costs be to wireline, CMRS, interconnected VoIP, and Internet-based TRS providers and 911 authorities of setting the demarcation point as proposed? **If calls are delivered directly from originating service providers to PSAPs rather than an ESInet, should originating service providers be responsible for performing call transfers, dynamic call routing, and other functions that some ESInets perform? Would this make it easier for PSAPs to provide the modern capabilities envisioned for NG911?**

41. We also seek comment on what level of NG911 readiness PSAPs should achieve to trigger the requirements for 1) wireline, CMRS, interconnected VoIP, and Internet-based TRS providers to transmit 911 calls to the point(s) designated by the 911 authority, and 2) wireline, interconnected VoIP, and Internet-based TRS providers to begin delivering calls, including routing and location information, in IP-based format. Our proposed approach would establish one level of readiness to trigger these obligations. We seek comment on whether specific NG911-related network components or capabilities would need to be in place to establish readiness. Another approach, as suggested by NASNA, would be to define three readiness phases based on the TFOPA "NG9-1-1 Readiness Scorecard." What are the costs and benefits associated with NASNA's suggestion? If we were to adopt NASNA's suggestion, what level of readiness would trigger the requirement for service from wireline, CMRS, interconnected VoIP, and Internet-based TRS providers? Are there generally accepted standards for PSAP readiness to accept IP traffic? How have 911 authorities that accept some IP traffic navigated readiness with providers? Should we consider different or additional phases? Should individual PSAPs be able to trigger the requirement or should readiness be established at a more aggregated level, e.g., on an ESInet- by-ESInet or state-by-state basis? As part of a valid request, should a 911 authority be required to certify or demonstrate the capability of its IP-based network to support 911 interoperability? **Is the 2016 TFOPA Report outdated, or did it make assumptions about the implementation of NG911 that are no longer valid?**

42. For purposes of determining whether a state or local 911 authority could be technically ready to receive calls in IP-based format, we seek comment on the elements that a state or local 911 authority would need to have in place before making a valid request. In the Location-Based Routing NPRM proceeding, Verizon argues for a "robust PSAP readiness standard, that reflects the substantial completion of a PSAP's NG911 provider's i3 based solution" as the basis for considering a request "valid" and triggering an implementation period. Verizon asserts that relevant factors for PSAP readiness to accept IP interconnection would be, at a minimum: (1) "PSAP connectivity with a NG911 provider who has fully

deployed a standards-based i3 IP infrastructure”; (2) “completion of SIP connectivity onboarding and testing with Wireless Originating Service Providers”; (3) “completion of HTTP-Enabled Location Delivery (HELD) certification”; and (4) “PSAP i3-ready call handling equipment.” We seek comment on whether some or all of these factors should be considered in determining readiness before a valid request may be made. What are the benefits and costs associated with such a proposal? Would adopting a specific set of factors to establish readiness limit the flexibility of state and local 911 authorities as they continue their NG911 deployments? What efficiencies would be gained from adopting a specific set of factors? Should we consider additional factors to determine the level of readiness needed before a valid request may be made? For example, T-Mobile, in its comments on the Location-Based Routing NPRM, indicates that comprehensive testing would be required to determine PSAP readiness. Should we require testing as a precondition to a valid request? Should we have a separate request process for triggering IP-based service from Internet-based TRS providers from the valid request process for wireline, CMRS, and interconnected VoIP providers? If so, are there additional or different readiness criteria that should be included for IP-based service from Internet-based TRS providers? **Are there lessons learned from PSAPs that requested delivery of real-time text as direct IP traffic from service providers that could be applied here? How did those PSAPs certify readiness? Were there implementation issues that could have been prevented? If so, how?**

43. In addition, we seek comment as to whether we should define “IP-capable” as part of the readiness determination. Would such a definition be useful to wireline, interconnected VoIP, and Internet-based TRS providers and state and local 911 authorities? If so, what level of specificity should be required in the definition? For example, in the Location-Based Routing NPRM proceeding, T-Mobile indicates that the Commission should delineate between SIP and NG911 connectivity. What are the benefits associated with making this distinction in a potential definition of “IP-capable”? Should IP-capable mean SIP? **Are there different ways of implementing SIP, and if so, to what extent does that create a challenge for interoperability?** NENA, on the other hand, argues for using a more specific term in the rules “such as ‘i3 compatible’ or some other mutually-agreed terminology to describe standards-based” NG911. Would it be preferable to tie readiness to i3 compatibility? Are there other specific terms we should consider instead of or in addition to “IP-capable,” such as “NG911-capable”?

51. ... Do the definitions discussed above encompass current NG911 networks and technologies, as well as possible future NG911 technologies? **How would adopting the 2023 legislation’s definition of NG911 change the Commission’s approach to NG911 rules?**

Respectfully submitted,

APCO INTERNATIONAL

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