

**Statement for the Record
of
Greg Schaffer
Acting Deputy Under Secretary
National Protection and Programs Directorate
Department of Homeland Security**

**Before the
United States Senate
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
Washington, DC**

July 27, 2011

Introduction

Thank you Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins, and distinguished members of the Committee. It is a pleasure to discuss the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) efforts to improve communications for emergency response providers and government officials. As we approach the tenth anniversary of the attacks of September 11, 2001, there is no shortage of reminders of the need for an effective and efficient emergency response framework to manage incidents and restore essential services in the aftermath of a disaster. As just one recent example of many, we are all aware of the tragic series of tornadoes that ripped through the nation's heartland this year, causing billions of dollars in damages, killing hundreds, and leaving thousands homeless.

A top priority for DHS is improving the communications capabilities of those who are often the first to arrive at the scene of a disaster site—the Nation's emergency responders. Public safety personnel must have access to reliable and instantaneous communications at all times to effectively coordinate response and recovery operations. The Department recognizes that establishing emergency communications is not solely a technology problem that can be solved with just the "right" equipment or the "right" communications system. All of the critical factors for a successful interoperability solution—governance, standard operating procedures, training and exercises, and integration of systems into daily operations *as well as* technology—must and are being addressed through the collective work of our programs.

Further, DHS believes that effective emergency communications requires continued partnering with the millions of emergency responders that are the first to arrive on the scene of an incident, as well as non-governmental organizations, the general public, and citizens of affected communities. We look forward to discussing our respective efforts and key accomplishments to make the nation more prepared in an all-hazards environment.

Emergency Communications Responsibilities

Within the National Protection and Programs Directorate's (NPPD) Office of Cybersecurity and Communications (CS&C) are two organizations that focus on different but converging areas of telecommunications in support of emergency operations: the Office of Emergency

Communications (OEC) and the National Communications System (NCS). OEC and NCS are critical to shaping national policy and both work with other DHS components, federal departments and agencies, multiple levels of government, and the private sector to improve communications capabilities and achieve their mission requirements.

OEC was established as part of the congressional response to the communications challenges faced during the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina in 2005. OEC coordinates policy and assists in the development and implementation of operable and interoperable emergency communications capabilities for emergency responders at all levels of government, including federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial. OEC also led the development of the first National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).

The NCS, transferred from the Department of Defense to DHS in 2003, was created by executive order under President Kennedy to support the telecommunications functions of the Executive Office of the President and all federal departments and agencies for Continuity of Government, Enduring Constitutional Government, and Continuity of Operations. Presidents Reagan and George W. Bush each issued executive orders that evolved the responsibilities and structure of the NCS. Today, the NCS is an interagency system comprised of the telecommunications assets of 24 federal departments and agencies, each with significant operational, policy, regulatory, and enforcement responsibilities. The NCS coordinates telecommunications preparedness, response, and restoration activities across its 24 member agencies through the NCS Committee of Principals, which consists of senior government officials from each of the 24 member agencies, ensuring a diverse representation across the NCS that includes the full range of federal telecommunications assets.

Office of Emergency Communications

The creation of OEC was an important step toward improving the communication capabilities of those who are often the first to arrive at the scene of an incident—the nation’s emergency responders. Inadequate emergency communications have been a critical gap in our nation’s preparedness, and previous efforts to address this issue were hampered by the lack of a strong partnership between the Federal government and the public safety community. In addition, the nation lacked an overarching strategy to guide emergency communications planning and build capabilities at all levels of government.

In the last four years, OEC has worked to fill many of these and other gaps, and we are seeing progress in several key areas that enable emergency responders to interoperate in an all-hazards environment. As part of its mission, OEC led a comprehensive nationwide planning effort with more than 150 stakeholders from the emergency response community to develop the NECP. This included significant feedback and coordination with the SAFECOM Executive Committee, the SAFECOM Emergency Response Council, and the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council. These stakeholder groups represent the interests of millions of emergency responders, as well as the state and local governments that public safety communications serves. Involving these groups from the beginning ensured that the plan took stakeholders’ input into account and would be widely accepted in the public safety community.

In the almost three years since it was released, the NECP has been instrumental in defining communication priorities for public safety personnel at all levels of government. OEC has been driving implementation of the NECP in coordination with its federal, state, and local partners, and we are seeing measurable improvements with building capabilities and closing gaps identified in the plan for governance, training, operating procedures, and others, including:

- **Enhanced Statewide Coordination:** The creation of Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans (SCIPs), Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWICs) and Statewide Interoperability Governing Bodies (SIGBs) has improved coordination of emergency communications activities and investments throughout all 56 states and territories. Through the SCIP development and updating process, the SWICs, in collaboration with their SIGBs, have been effective in helping states define their communications needs and future investments and ensuring that federal funding is directed where it is needed most. In addition, OEC has conducted nearly 150 workshops over the past three years to assist states as they implement and update their SCIPs.
- **Common Plans, Protocols, and Procedures:** The use of standardized plans and procedures is driving improved command, control, and communications among emergency responder agencies in the field. To facilitate this, OEC and FEMA have worked with more than 140 jurisdictions, including Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) regions, to develop Tactical Interoperable Communications Plans that document formalized interoperability governance groups, standardized policies and procedures, and emergency communications equipment inventories. States continue to develop these communications plans to cover additional regions.
- **Targeted Technical Assistance:** OEC has implemented a technical assistance strategy to ensure that all states and territories can request and receive its targeted, on-site emergency communications assistance, while also focusing support on the states and urban areas most in need. These offerings are tailored to support the priorities in each state's or territory's SCIP and the objectives of the NECP. Since 2008, the 56 states and territories have combined to request more than 750 individual technical assistance services from OEC for support with the development of governance structures, tactical and strategic planning, and a variety of engineering services.
- **Increased Training Opportunities:** OEC has developed Communications Unit Leader (COML) and Communications Technician (COMT) courses to improve emergency responders' proficiency with communications equipment and to assist them with coordinating roles and responsibilities during an incident or event. The COML program has been embraced by emergency responders nationwide, and OEC has trained more than 3,500 responders, technicians, and planners to lead communications at incidents across the nation, including local floods, blizzards, and wildfires. Trained COMLs have also contributed to recovery efforts throughout the United States, including the recent outbreak of tornados and massive flooding in the Midwest and Southeast.
- **Enhanced Border Communications and Coordination:** OEC has been actively working with our international partners at the Northern and Southern borders to improve

cross-border interoperable communications planning, policy development, and operations communications. DHS recently awarded \$25 million in grant funding to states and local communities under the Border Interoperability Demonstration Project—a one-time competitive grant program focused on developing innovative solutions to strengthen interoperable emergency communications along the U.S. borders with our partners in Canada and Mexico.

- **Improved Governance and Coordination:** OEC is working with federal, regional, state, and local agencies to increase coordination, information sharing, and oversight of interoperability through formal governance structures and partnerships. For example:
 - SIGBs have been created in every state and territory and include representatives from all levels of government to coordinate and support statewide interoperability. The State of Indiana, for example, has implemented an effective governance process for emergency communications through the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee, which also serves as an advisory group to the State’s Integrated Public Safety Commission. Many states have also implemented Regional Interoperability Committees to provide insight into the statewide strategy from an operational perspective.
 - OEC continues to receive insightful feedback and input from responders, associations, and emergency communications professionals through the SAFECOM Executive Committee, SAFECOM Emergency Response Council, and the newly chartered National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators.
 - OEC recently instituted a Regional Coordination Program to strengthen collaboration and knowledge sharing with our stakeholders. OEC has established a Regional Coordinator in each of the 10 FEMA Regions, and they regularly participate in the SIGBS, the UASI interoperability meetings and their respective FEMA Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Groups.
 - The Emergency Communications Preparedness Center (ECPC) provides an inter-departmental mechanism to coordinate common solutions, streamline development of policy and plans, and jointly engage state, local, and tribal partners. The ECPC has achieved early successes through defining a strategic agenda that reflects shared member priorities and establishes issue-specific focus groups to drive immediate action. Key accomplishments include: (1) coordinated inputs on national policy, such as federal agency comments on the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) National Broadband Plan; (2) developed and published recommendations for common federal grant guidance to synchronize emergency communications spending across more than 40 grant programs; (3) initiated efforts to drive capability and resource sharing through mapping and analyzing existing federal communications resources; and (4) implemented a clearinghouse capability and data repository to yield improved information sharing and coordination.

- To complement inter-governmental activities, OEC facilitates the Department's One DHS Emergency Communications Committee. This committee, comprising senior executives from the Office of the Secretary and the Components, provides a vital mechanism for maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's emergency communications investments and activities. The One DHS Committee reached its most significant milestone recently with the creation of the first-ever unified One DHS Emergency Communications Strategy. The Strategy establishes a common vision "to ensure access to and exchange of mission-critical information across the Homeland Security Enterprise anywhere, anytime, through unified capabilities." The Strategy also sets goals for coordinating and improving emergency communications architecture, investment, governance, and operations.

Further, OEC and FEMA have partnered on the Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program (IECGP), which has been a primary vehicle for implementing the Department's interoperability goals. It has been instrumental in advancing the state of interoperable emergency communications throughout the nation, especially through its emphasis on:

- Establishing governance bodies that conduct strategic planning and prioritize investments;
- Supporting SWICs who ensure federally funded projects align to strategic plans; and
- Funding the implementation of NECP Goals, allowing DHS to measure progress in emergency communications capabilities nationwide.

OEC has also partnered with the DHS Science and Technology (S&T) Directorate to promote the effective use of Federal grant funding through the development of the SAFECOM Grant Guidance.

By focusing on these core capabilities—planning, governance, training, interagency coordination, and technology support—emergency response agencies are becoming more equipped to establish and maintain interoperable communications during response and recovery activities. One such example of how this is translating into "real world" success can be seen in Louisiana, where recovery operations have benefitted from years of governance planning, relationship building, and communications training. Using lessons learned and improvement efforts associated with Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana statewide officials are invested in improving interoperable and operable communications throughout the State, including the deployment of a robust statewide communication system for public safety use.

The State's standards-based system—called the Louisiana Wireless Information Network—has effectively supported interoperable communications performance during evacuation efforts for Hurricane Gustav and, more recently, the response to the BP oil spill. Interagency coordination was tested from the moment that the explosion occurred last April, and local responders were able to successfully communicate with each other and with the United States Coast Guard.

Louisiana also coordinated with surrounding states to create talk groups designated for the spill and effectively used trained COMLs to initiate the process of action planning and lead major communications efforts throughout operations, including connecting multiple systems from surrounding states. Of course our hope is that another large incident in the Gulf will never happen, but if it does, Federal, state, and local agencies have demonstrated that they are more prepared and coordinated than ever before.

NECP Goal Assessments

Implementation of the NECP has been a key driver behind much of our progress in improving interoperability. More than 85 percent of the NECP milestones have been achieved to date, and progress is evident in all of the NECP priority areas, such as governance, training, and coordination. Nevertheless, considerable work still remains to achieve the long-term vision of the NECP, in which emergency responders can communicate as needed, on demand, as authorized, at all levels of government and across all disciplines.

To move the nation even closer to that vision, OEC is engaged in a comprehensive, nationwide assessment of emergency communications capabilities as it implements the NECP Goals. When complete, this assessment will provide a detailed view of capabilities at the county or county-equivalent level in all 56 states and territories. This detailed look at emergency communications—the first of its kind—will generate valuable data for both DHS and the states to use to more effectively and efficiently focus future resources and improvement activities.

OEC recently completed the measurement of Goal 1 of the NECP, which focused on emergency communications capabilities in the nation's largest cities. To measure NECP Goal 1, OEC worked with the UASI regions to assess their ability to demonstrate response-level emergency communications during a real-world event in each region. This approach enabled OEC to evaluate their use of emergency communications in real-world settings and in an economically efficient manner.

The results have been encouraging. Based on the capabilities documented at each Goal 1 event, all 60 urban areas were able to demonstrate the ability to establish response-level emergency communications in accordance with NECP Goal 1. This illustrated how the significant organizational and technical investments made by the UASIs have improved their emergency communications capabilities in recent years. In fact, OEC saw measurable improvements over key gaps identified in the previous DHS assessment of these urban areas in 2007, the *Tactical Interoperable Communications Scorecards* report. Some of these areas of progress were the result of DHS programs and funding, including the following:

- **Grants:** The NECP Goal 1 results showed an increase in the number of UASI regions using Project 25 (P25) digital radio standards-based systems, which are designed to allow interoperability regardless of equipment vendor. The implementation of P25 systems has been a provision in DHS grant guidance for several years, including the SAFECOM grant guidance and the Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program.
- **Training and Technical Assistance:** As previously discussed, OEC offers a COML training program that has trained more than 3,500 responders, technicians, and planners

to lead communications at incidents across the nation. This program began in part as a response to gaps identified in the 2007 DHS Tactical Interoperable Communications Plans Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TICP) Scorecard assessment, specifically the lack of trained COMLs. During the NECP Goal 1 events, OEC found that a large majority of the UASI regions had assigned DHS-trained COMLs to handle planning and implementing multi-system communications for the event.

- **Exercises:** Almost all UASI regions reported that agencies within their regions are now holding communication-specific exercises, and approximately half of them reported that the agencies are holding these exercises on a regular basis. This represents significant progress over similar findings from the DHS TICP report in 2007, which concluded that “almost no [UASI] region had completed a communications-focused exercise before the TICP validation exercise.”

OEC is currently in the process of implementing Goal 2 measurement, which calls for an assessment of emergency communications performance and capabilities at the county level (or county-equivalent level, such as parishes in Louisiana). This is a large undertaking, as there are more than 3,000 counties in the United States. OEC is working closely with the states and territories to complete this assessment by the end of this year and will be following up with them on how to use the results to update their SCIPs and more effectively utilize resources. From a DHS perspective, we believe the NECP Goals assessment will generate much needed capability data to more strategically direct federal and state emergency communications resources—including grant funds and technical assistance support—to where they are needed most.

Public Safety Broadband Network

Over the last decade, our Nation has made critical strides in strengthening overall security and national preparedness. The public safety community also has made significant progress improving emergency communications capabilities through enhanced coordination, planning, training, and equipment.

However, we have been limited by wireless technologies that were introduced decades ago. To fully achieve the vision of the 9/11 Commission, emergency responders must have an advanced, nationwide, inherently interoperable, public safety communications network. Recent developments in high-speed, wireless communications technology represent a new opportunity for emergency responders to have significantly greater operability, interoperability, and capability.

These broadband advancements can provide emergency responders with access to information that will improve their ability to safely and efficiently manage their daily activities and respond to all levels of emergency situations. For example, as President Obama stated in his State of the Union Address, these advancements can enable a firefighter to use a handheld device to download the design of a building before arriving at the scene of an emergency. These types of capabilities have the potential to save countless lives. That is why the Administration has been coordinating with the public safety community, the private sector, and Congress to promote initiatives for the deployment and development of a Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network.

Earlier this year, President Obama outlined his commitment to the development and deployment of such a network for public safety, a key recommendation from the *9/11 Commission Report*. The Administration's program in support of such a network is a component of its Wireless Innovation and Infrastructure Initiative, which was outlined in its Fiscal Year 2012 Budget. The public safety elements of the Initiative include an accounting for the foregone auction revenues resulting from reallocation of the D Block for use in the public safety broadband network; \$7 billion in direct financial support for network deployment; \$500 million for development and testing of broadband public safety requirements, standards and software applications (to be administered through the National Institute of Standards and Technology); and \$5 billion for support to rural broadband services, including public safety services.

The Administration is fully committed to working with Congress to ensure the passage of legislation that meets the critical national need of establishing a public safety broadband network. We appreciate the bipartisan Congressional leadership on this issue that crosses committees of jurisdiction, including Chairman Lieberman, Chairman Rockefeller, and Senator McCain. We are confident that through continued cooperation with Congress, we can deliver a network that meets the needs of America's first responders whom all Americans rely upon.

OEC has been extremely active in support of the President's Wireless Innovation and Infrastructure Initiative and helping prepare the nation's responders for the deployment of broadband. OEC has worked closely with its federal partners at the Departments of Commerce and Justice to help set the broad policy framework for the planned network, and has coordinated with its state and local partners to ensure the public safety community's requirements are fully represented in network broadband planning and implementation efforts. More specific examples include the following OEC broadband-focused programs and activities:

- **Policy and Planning:** OEC is preparing an addendum to the NECP for release later this year that will identify key broadband challenges and recommend near-term actions to foster the integration of broadband technologies and data capabilities. This addendum also will propose further measures to support current interoperability efforts and to maintain existing Land Mobile Radio communications capabilities until broadband technologies can support mission-critical communications for first responders.
- **Outreach and Coordination:** OEC is working with all of its stakeholder groups—including the SAFECOM Executive Committee and Emergency Response Council, National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators, ECPC, and the One DHS Committee on Emergency Communications—to ensure the views and requirements of the public safety community are fully represented in broadband planning and implementation efforts.
 - OEC supports outreach efforts related to the development and deployment of a nationwide public safety broadband network to include operational requirements, funding, standards, spectrum requirements, and governance. This includes support for an Innovation Roundtable with representatives from government, associations, public safety, and industry. OEC is also supporting a committee of

jurisdictions that received FCC waivers for early deployment of 700 MHz broadband systems as they begin their efforts to build networks. Through these efforts, OEC is continuing to emphasize the need for planning and good governance, since these elements of emergency communications have yielded progress to date.

- OEC continues to coordinate with the emergency response community, preparing wireless broadband guidance documents for SWICs, urban area and regional interoperability coordinators, public officials and executives, and emergency responders to support current NECP initiatives on interoperability planning. OEC also continues to provide emergency response stakeholders up-to-date and comprehensive information about wireless broadband in the emergency response environment. In addition, OEC is working with states and jurisdictions to incorporate broadband initiatives into the SCIPs.
- To increase coordination of federal efforts for broadband implementation, the ECPC is working to identify federal broadband requirements, preparing a consolidated view of emergency communications assets, addressing associated legal and regulatory barriers, developing departmental positions on pending broadband regulatory matters and rulemakings, and establishing standardized grant guidance and processes. The ECPC has identified the development of broadband standards and research and development as one of its strategic priorities for the coming year.
- Concurrently, the One DHS for Emergency Communications Committee is providing consolidated departmental input into federal interagency efforts, as well as developing strategies for broadband technology migration (i.e., transition from current land mobile radio technology).
- **Grants:** OEC's current SAFECOM grant guidance, which includes input from state, local, territorial, and tribal responders, contains a number of key provisions pertaining to broadband deployment. Further, the *ECPC Recommendations for Federal Agencies: Financial Assistance for Emergency Communications*, a document for federal emergency communications grant programs, will include updated guidance concerning the deployment of the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network.
- **Technical Assistance:** OEC has developed a wireless broadband technical assistance offering for 2011 to assist state, local, territorial, tribal and regional users develop and improve their use of broadband technology in line with the vision of a nationally interoperable network. The offering, which can be tailored for each jurisdiction, will provide informational briefings, governance models and standard operating procedures, project planning, and engineering support.

In addition, NCS provides technical advice to OEC regarding communications standards to ensure the proposed public safety network is interoperable with the commercial communications

networks. NCS also ensures that the priority functions for national security emergency preparedness function seamlessly as they operate between the networks.

National Communications System

Since its inception, NCS has developed programs and services to address the unique communications challenges associated with communications divestiture, deregulation, natural disasters, and terrorist attacks on our nation.

As the co-lead for Emergency Support Function #2 (ESF-2) – Communications, under the National Response Framework, NCS coordinates government and industry during planning for and response to disasters and major outages. The operational arm for communications activities is the 24/7 National Coordinating Center for Telecommunications (NCC), which coordinates emergency response operations supporting the National Response Framework. The NCC is, and has been, a consistent coordinating mechanism for managing efficient communications restoration and recovery activity for more than 25 years. The NCC also coordinates the communications assets of the NCS members to provide communications assistance during disasters (manmade or natural). During a response, the NCC also provides requirements priorities to industry partners.

NCS also manages government industry partnerships to assist decision-makers in understanding the risks to the Communications Sector. Under Homeland Security Presidential Directive 7, NCS is the sector-specific agency for the Communications Sector and coordinates government and industry partners under the Critical Infrastructure Protection Advisory Committee Act to reduce communications sector risk. NCS also manages the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee (NSTAC), which comprises 27 Chief Executive Officer-level members from communications, information technology, and defense corporations. Most recently, the NSTAC examined four scenarios designed to stress future 2015-level networks, and provided the President with recommendations for technology enhancements and government investments that would provide the best network resilience and recovery.

NCS capabilities include the following:

- **Operational Activities:** NCS develops and maintains NS/EP communications priority services programs, such as the Government Emergency Telecommunication System (GETS) and Wireless Priority Services (WPS), which provide users with priority on commercial networks. The GETS program is a White House-directed emergency telecommunications service managed by NCS. GETS supports over 274,000 federal, state, local, and tribal government, industry, and non-governmental organization personnel in performing their NS/EP communications missions by providing a robust mechanism to complete calls during network congestion from anywhere in the United States. Specifically, GETS provides 90 percent or more call completion rates when network call volume is up to eight times greater than normal capacity. For example, approximately 10,000 GETS calls were made with a 95 percent success rate during the 9/11 attacks, and 1,231 GETS calls were made with a 90 percent or more success rate during the 2003 Blackout.

WPS is a nationwide program that provides priority NS/EP telecommunications via selected commercial wireless carriers. This program enhances the ability of 108,000 NS/EP subscribers to complete calls through a degraded public switched telephone network during a crisis or emergency situation. WPS calls receive the next available radio channel during times of wireless congestion and helps to ensure that key NS/EP personnel can complete critical calls by providing priority access for key leaders and supporting first responders. WPS service provides authorized cellular users with the ability to have priority within the public switched telephone network as well as access to priority channels.

The Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) Program authorizes and provides priority treatment of NS/EP telecommunications services. The TSP Program provides service providers with an FCC mandate for prioritizing service requests by identifying those services critical to NS/EP. For example, a telecommunications service with a TSP assignment will receive priority by the service vendor before a non-TSP service. The TSP Program has two components: restoration and provisioning. A restoration priority applies to telecommunications services to ensure restoration before any other services. A provisioning priority is obtained to facilitate priority installation of new telecommunications services in response to an emergency. In addition to daily operations, TSP Program Office personnel are notified of presidentially declared disasters; activation of the National Response Framework, ESF-2; and Continuity of Operations and Continuity of Government (COOP/COG) plans. TSP Program Office personnel are on call 24/7. TSP can save days to weeks on the time required to return wireline voice/data services, and there are more than 200,000 active TSP circuit assignments in support of NS/EP communications.

NCS continues to migrate GETS and WPS services to work across evolving networks. NCS works with industry to enhance and assure these priority programs are compatible with Next Generation Network (NGN) technology.

The Modeling, Analysis, and Technology Assessments team provides expertise in modeling and analyzing current and future protocols, algorithms, network designs, and capabilities that will impact priority service communications in legacy and NGNs. The modeling team also maintains a suite of specialized infrastructure analysis tools to provide critical infrastructure risk assessments for the communications sector in the event of a man-made or natural disaster. The assessments consist of the following:

- Providing technical analysis of current and next generation communications systems, new technologies, physical and logical architectures, and products related to communications network infrastructures.
- Determining new and emerging communications technologies under various congestion and failure conditions to identify vulnerabilities and predict performance of existing and next generation networks.

- Developing products to be used for COOP/COG functions during disaster response related to federal, state, local and tribal governments.
- **Standards Activities:** The NCS Standards Team is an active leader and contributor to various national and international standards developing organizations, ensuring industry-wide adoption of non-proprietary solutions for NS/EP preparedness telecommunications requirements.

The Team provides leadership and representation in standards bodies to recommend standards that, when implemented in Internet Protocol-based networks, will provide capabilities to ensure national, state, and local leaderships' ability to communicate during times of crisis.

The Third Generation Partnership Project, known as 3GPP, is focused on the technical aspects associated with provisioning priority services in Long Term Evolution networks and is being pursued under the enhanced Multimedia Priority Service project. In cooperation with the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions (ATIS), NCS is developing an End-to-End Next Generation Network GETS Service Call Flow Standard that specifies end-to-end call flows. ATIS is also developing the baseline text for an Emergency Telecommunications Service wireline access requirements standard. This standard details the network element requirements for wireline access in support of Digital Subscriber Line, Cable, Fiber, and Metro Ethernet.

- **National Response Planning:** NCS is working with federal, regional, state, and local agencies to increase communications coordination, information sharing, and oversight of emergency preparedness activities to improve response to man-made and natural disasters. NCS works with these entities to ensure a coordinated response through formal governance structures and partnerships.

International Interoperability

DHS is working with its international partners to enhance interoperable communications to bolster information sharing and coordination among law enforcement personnel around the world.

For example, the United States and Mexico are establishing a new cross-border communications network, which will improve incident response and coordination among participating federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement and public safety personnel along the border. Installation is scheduled to begin this summer. DHS and Public Safety Canada also work together to enhance cross-border interoperable communications planning, policy development and operations through the annual Canada-U.S. Cross-Border Interoperable Communications Workshops.

Conclusion

The Department appreciates the Committee's support for our interoperable emergency communications activities. Thank you again for this opportunity to testify. I would be pleased to answer your questions.