

# National Emergency Number Association

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February 20, 2004

The Honorable John McCain, Chairman  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
508 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510-6125

Dear Chairman McCain:

On behalf of the National Emergency Number Association (NENA), I write to share with you, our leadership, present activity and concerns with our nation's 9-1-1 system and Internet-based communications systems.

An organization consisting of public officials, fire, EMS, law enforcement, equipment and service providing vendors, NENA is the "Voice of 9-1-1." Over 7,000 members strong, we promote research, planning, training, and education for all 9-1-1 activities. We also study, develop and implement technical and operational practices to support the 9-1-1 community as a whole. In all of this, we advocate for the protection of human life, the preservation of property and the maintenance of general security. Simply stated, we support the very best 9-1-1 capabilities from any device, anywhere at anytime.

As innovative and new ways to call 9-1-1 have emerged, so too have calls for us to explore and examine efficient uses of 9-1-1 services based on Internet Protocol (IP). In this call for action, we recognize that IP is dynamic, competitive, innovative, and most of all, an opportunity to improve our nation's 9-1-1 system. Unlike some recent 9-1-1 service additions, we expect future 9-1-1 design to incorporate IP, take all known enhanced 9-1-1 (E9-1-1) feature needs into account, as well as new issues, and migrate to a path of ubiquity.

Our starting point in this process is a negotiated agreement between NENA and several major companies providing or planning to provide Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) voice services. As the 9-1-1 experts, we see this agreement, as more than anything, the immediate need to roll up our sleeves and begin working on these vital issues. The 9-1-1 technical, policy and operational issues associated with Internet-based communications are equally novel and complex, and through our agreement, we are working with all our committee groups and the IP constituency to define both interim and long term solutions for 9-1-1 and VoIP within calendar year 2004.

Specifically, the agreement establishes six points of a cooperative effort; these range from coordination with Counties and Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) to establishing 9-1-1 call delivery methods, as well as an effort to define true interim, and long term, full E9-1-1 solutions for these services. Attached for your review, and for the full record, please find a copy of our agreement. As we make progress under this agreement, we look forward to sharing our findings with the Committee.



All too often the 9-1-1 community has struggled with new technology and service offerings. The Committee's inquiry into IP and 9-1-1 is to be applauded as it's an opportunity to move forward from those struggles, with an understanding by all parties, especially the IP world, that we all need to work together to ensure the entire nation has access to vital 9-1-1 services.

As we continue to examine Internet-based communications applications and integration with 9-1-1, we stand at your service to provide support in our work to achieve a collaborative dialogue with all stakeholders to develop and implement policy recommendations for these exciting services.

We appreciate the Committee's interest in 9-1-1 and Internet-based communications services, and look forward to working directly with you in the future.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RT', is centered below the word 'Sincerely'.

Richard Taylor, ENP  
NENA, President

Cc: Congressional E9-1-1 Caucus  
Federal Communications Commission, Chairman, Michael Powell  
Association of Public Safety Communications Officials International  
National State Nine One One Administrators