

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)	
)	
Facilitating Implementation of Next)	PS Docket No. 21-479
Generation 911 Services (NG911))	
)	
Improving 911 Reliability)	PS Docket 13-75
)	

**REPLY COMMENTS OF
THE ALLIANCE FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS**

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The Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions (ATIS) hereby submits these reply comments to the *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM)*, released March 28, 2025, in the above-referenced dockets. In these replies, ATIS:

- (1) agrees with other commenters that Commission’s functional equivalent approach should not be adopted and instead the term “CSP” should be defined based on general functions;
- (2) notes that it is premature and may ultimately be unnecessary to adopt the proposed interoperability certification requirements;
- (3) urges the Commission to consider the security implications and deployment challenges associated with interlinking NGCS systems;
- (4) urges the Commission to adopt a useful definition of interoperability;
- (5) supports the Commission’s proposal to protect sensitive data that may be included as part of the proposed interoperability certifications;
- (6) urges the Commission to refrain from addressing the next generation emergency texting issues until the industry has completed the work it has underway to consider features that be extended to NG911, such as read receipts, typing indicators, and multimedia;
- (7) notes that it is unnecessary for the Commission to expand its NG911 outage reporting rules;
- (8) urges the Commission to consider whether user minutes (as defined in § 4.7(e)) is the appropriate metric for NG911 outages;
- (9) supports the initiation of a separate proceeding to determine ways that outage reporting burdens can be reduced; and
- (10) urges the Commission to reconsider its proposed NG911 rules, which would exacerbate existing issues with PSAP notifications.

I. Input from ATIS Emergency Services Interconnection Forum¹

A. Definition of Covered Service Provider

The Commission seeks comment in the *FNPRM* on whether the current definition of Covered Service Providers (CSPs) should specify which NG911 capabilities are the “functional equivalent” of the covered legacy routing and transmission services.²

ATIS ESIF agrees with other commenters that that Commission’s functional equivalent approach creates challenges and should not be adopted. ATIS agrees with NENA: The 9-1-1 Association (NENA) that “[d]efining CSPs by specifying in the rules which FEs they provide is problematic because technology moves faster than regulatory processes” and proposes that the Commission should, as much as possible, defer to Commonly Accepted Standards to identify these elements.³ As The Broadband Association (USTelecom) explains in its comments, attempting to enumerate specific services or technical components is “inherently brittle and quickly outdated” and the Commission should establish guiding principles based on a provider’s role in the end-to-end NG911 call flow.⁴ Intrado Life & Safety (Intrado) agrees, explaining in its comments that listing specific components is overly prescriptive and unnecessary for the Commission to have meaningful oversight over Next Generation Core Services (NGCS) providers and that listing specific technical components of NG911 in the rule risks stifling innovation in a sector that may find more performant and/or more cost-effective ways to process caller location.⁵ Comtech in its comments adds that the Commission’s proposed approach risks being both overinclusive in some respects and underinclusive in others, potentially increasing

¹ Input on the issues addressed in Section I of these reply comments was provided by ATIS’ Emergency Services Interconnection Forum (ESIF).

² *FNPRM* at ¶34.

³ NENA Comments at p. 5.

⁴ USTelecom Comments at p. 6.

⁵ Intrado Comments at p. 14.

regulatory uncertainty and producing unintended consequences for 911 providers and public safety.⁶

ATIS agrees with commenters that the term “CSP” should be defined based on general functions and not on specific vintages of standards. The Industry Council for Emergency Response Technologies (iCERT), for example, urges the Commission to focus on the overall functionality of 911 services rather than relying on overly specific, static terminology.⁷ Comtech explains in its comments that grounding the definition of CSPs in a service’s operational role within the NG911 architecture would help ensure that all services materially affecting 911 calls are deemed “covered,” without relying on static or incomplete categorizations.⁸ ATIS ESIF agrees with the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials, International (APCO) that the Commission’s NG911 requirements should strive to be forward-looking and allow for the evolution of technologies and services.⁹

ATIS ESIF strongly believes the Commission should not mandate specific functional equivalents. While examples of functional equivalents in the proposed rules may provide useful guidance to CSPs, these examples should not be mandated. To put it in standards parlance, these examples should be informative, not normative.¹⁰ Regulatory mandates can create rigid and stagnant frameworks that are ill-suited to the dynamic nature of today’s communications systems. Mandates can also quickly become obsolete as new technologies are developed and implemented. Once irrelevant or obsolete, these requirements continue to impose unnecessary

⁶ Comtech Comments at p. 9.

⁷ iCERT Comments at p.6.

⁸ Comtech Comments at p. 7.

⁹ APCO Comments at p. 8.

¹⁰ A normative reference is one that is essential for the application of a standard, Informative references provide supplementary information that can enhance understanding but are not required for compliance.

burdens until/unless the rules are changed, while providing no ongoing useful benefit to the public.

ATIS ESIF believes that only elements in real-time call flows should be covered under the CSP definition. Examples of NGCS that should be covered by the Commission's CSP definition include routing, location conveyance, data conveyance, multi-media conveyance, incident handling, and mechanisms that support call transfer.

Finally on this issue, ATIS ESIF supports in part NENA's recommendation that the Bureau maintain a list of covered functional elements only as examples, but not as mandates. ATIS ESIF agrees that such examples could be updated through petition by a Commonly Accepted Standards body.¹¹

B. Conformance Testing

The Commission in the *FNPRM* proposes to adopt what it characterizes as “an interoperability best practice benchmark of testing and verification to support interstate interoperability,”¹² under which CSPs would have to test and confirm that they are able to process and share interstate 911 requests for emergency assistance and all associated information consistent with commonly accepted standards.¹³

ATIS ESIF believes that it is premature and may ultimately be unnecessary to adopt the proposed interoperability certification requirements because, in many areas, the transition to NG911 has not yet begun or is still in its early stages. iCERT explains that Emergency Services IP Network (ESInet) providers are already working to promote interoperability through

¹¹ NENA Comments at p. 5.

¹² *FNPRM* at ¶73.

¹³ *FNPRM* at ¶74. As the Commission notes in the *FNPRM*, conformance testing is used to ensure that deployed devices and network equipment are compliant with commonly accepted standards and is generally planned and developed by industry organizations and conducted by certified labs. *FNPRM* at ¶73

conformance to NG911 standards, collaboration with 911 Authorities and ESInet providers, and adherence to established best practices. Introducing new interoperability requirements while the transition to NG911 is in its early stages could hinder the NG911 transition by diverting limited deployment resources, discouraging innovation, and imposing unnecessary costs on CSPs and 911 Authorities.¹⁴

As Motorola Solutions Connectivity, Inc. (MSCI) explains in its comments, the proposal to require annual equipment conformance testing also would be counterproductive to the Commission's objective of improving reliability and interoperability of NG911 systems.¹⁵

Moreover, a certification requirement by itself would not materially advance interoperability in the field or in a production environment but rather would subject CSPs to unnecessary burdens. ATIS ESIF agrees with NENA that it is not feasible to create an effective conformance test that, alone, results in interoperability of NG911.¹⁶ True conformance testing, as NENA notes, will take time to create and must be given time to be comprehensive enough to work as needed.¹⁷

C. Interoperability

In the *FNPRM*, the Commission proposes that CSPs be required to certify that they can process and share interstate 911 requests for emergency assistance and all associated information consistent with commonly accepted standards.¹⁸ ATIS ESIF urges the Commission to consider the security implications associated with such interoperability. ATIS ESIF notes that the

¹⁴ iCERT Comments at p. 5.

¹⁵ MSCI Comments at p. 5.

¹⁶ NENA Comments at p. 6.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *FNPRM* at ¶74.

interlinking of all NGCS systems in the U.S. introduces deployment challenges and security risks.

ATIS ESIF also notes that, while the Commission proposes an interoperability requirement, it does not offer a useful definition of interoperability in this context. The proposed text for section 9.19(c)(4) of the Commission's rules provides insufficient guidance, offering too simplistic of an approach to achieve interoperability.¹⁹ ATIS ESIF urges the Commission to adopt a formal definition of "interoperability" in the context of NG911.

Protecting the information in these certifications is vitally important. These certifications will contain sensitive information that, if leaked to bad actors, could be used to disrupt U.S. communications networks. ATIS ESIF therefore supports the Commission's proposal to protect the sensitive data that may be included as part of these certifications, consistent with its treatment of other Commission certifications.²⁰

D. ATIS NG911 Texting Standard

ATIS ESIF urges the Commission to defer to the industry's work to develop and enhance NG911. As noted in its comments, ATIS ESIF is aggressively working on end-to-end emergency texting standards to consider features like read receipts, typing indicators, and multimedia, which can be extended to NG911 messaging, while ensuring that these enhancements remain compatible with SMS delivery.²¹ ATIS ESIF urges the Commission to refrain from addressing the next generation emergency texting issues until the industry has a chance to complete this

¹⁹ *FNPRM* at Appendix A, proposed 47CFR 9.19(c)(4): "Interoperability can be achieved by conducting annual standards conformance testing and annual interoperability testing that validate the covered 911 service provider's interoperability for its interstate facilities."

²⁰ *FNPRM* at ¶99; *FNPRM* at Appendix A, proposed changes to 47 CFR §9.19(d)(2).

²¹ See <https://atis.org/committees-forums/esif/>.

work. If the Commission desires additional information, it could initiate a notice of inquiry to update the record.

II. Input from ATIS Network Reliability Steering Committee

The following input regarding the *FNPRM*'s Part 4 inquiries was provided by the ATIS Network Reliability Steering Committee (ATIS NRSC).²²

A. Expansion of the Part 4 Rules Is Unnecessary

In the *FNPRM*, the Commission seeks comment on whether Section 4.5(e) of its outage reporting rules²³ should be modified to reflect the proposed expansion of its NG911 reliability rules.²⁴ While the Commission acknowledges that Section 4.5(e) already applies to NG911 outages, it asks if this rule should specifically reference outages within the NG911 ecosystem facilities that it proposes to define as critical (e.g., Major Transport Providers, ESInet interconnection facilities, NGCS facilities, etc.).²⁵

ATIS NRSC believes that expansion of the Commission's NG911 outage reporting rules is neither necessary nor warranted. As many commenters have noted, the existing rules already cover NG911 outages. Verizon notes that the Commission's 911 and outage reporting rules and policies already hold originating service providers (OSPs) responsible for reliable 911 call delivery and network design practices, regardless of whether those facilities are self-provisioned or procured from third party providers.²⁶ As Verizon notes, there are no gaps to be addressed by

²² ATIS' **Network Reliability Steering Committee (NRSC)** plays a key role in enhancing the reliability of public communications networks by offering timely, expert guidance rooted in industry consensus. Operating in a collaborative and noncompetitive environment, the NRSC identifies opportunities to improve network performance and resilience. It supports the communications sector by developing and publishing a range of resources—including standards, technical requirements, reports, bulletins, best practices, and annual reviews—that help drive consistent and effective reliability improvements across the industry.

²³ 47 CFR §4.5(e).

²⁴ *FNPRM* at ¶35

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ Verizon Comments at pp. 2-3.

changes to the Part 4 rules as the Commission’s “established rules and policies governing the use of underlying third party transport and solution vendors squarely address this issue.”²⁷

USTelecom explains that existing Part 4 rules should provide the visibility into 911 outages that the Commission seeks and that changes to the rules are not necessary to address “sunny day” outages caused by third-party transport services because these entities’ networks are currently covered by existing rules.²⁸ Intrado agrees that, under the existing rules, both OSPs and their non-affiliated vendors supporting 911 traffic delivery should already be filing in NORS and notifying PSAPs of outages. As Intrado notes, Section 4.3 of the Commission’s rules defines “originating service provider” by communication type and, for each type, includes “non-affiliated entities that maintain or provide communications networks.”²⁹

In addition, unnecessarily expanding outage reporting obligations runs contrary to recent Commission actions aimed at reducing regulatory burdens. The Commission’s recent *Delete, Delete, Delete Public Notice (Delete PN)*³⁰ sought input regarding unnecessary regulatory burdens. As CTIA notes in its comments in this proceeding, the record in the *Delete PN* proceeding demonstrated a need to reform the Commission’s outage reporting rules.³¹

B. NG911 Outage Metric Must Be Modified

The Commission asks for input regarding whether user minutes (as defined in § 4.7(e)) are the appropriate metric for outages that are specific to NG911 facilities and, if not, what the appropriate metric should be.³²

²⁷ Verizon Comments at p.3.

²⁸ USTelecom Comments at p. 4.

²⁹ Intrado Comments (citing *Second Report & Order* at n.5 (noting the provider definitions in § 4.3 are not limited to dial-tone OSP providers and extend to “middle mile” or “wholesale transport network facilities”)).

³⁰ *Public Notice*, GN Docket No. 25-133 (released Mar 12, 2025).

³¹ CTIA Comments at p. 5.

³² *FNPRM* at ¶35.

ATIS NRSC appreciates the Commission raising this important issue. As the Commission correctly notes, ATIS has explained in previous filings that the outage threshold calculations set forth in §§ 4.5(e) and 4.7(e) are unsuitable for NG911 networks and that NG911 outage thresholds should be determined based on census or population data.³³ Unlike legacy 911 systems, NG911 systems using the i3 architecture do not have access to telephone number counts. Legacy systems match a caller's phone number with information in the Master Street Address Guide (MSAG) to determine a caller's location. With NG911 systems using the i3 architecture, calls may be validated and routed using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data rather than the MSAG, making the current calculation difficult to apply. Without telephone number counts, CSPs cannot calculate the number of user minutes potentially affected by an outage under Section 4.7(e) and thus cannot determine whether an outage potentially affects a 911 special facility under Section 4.5(e).

ATIS reiterates its recommendation that the Commission amend Section 4.7(e) to require 911 system service providers operating on legacy systems and NG911 systems based on the NENA i3 standard to use census data rather than telephone number counts to determine the number of user minutes potentially affected by an outage.³⁴

C. The Commission Should Focus on Reducing Part 4 Burdens

To the extent the Commission believes that Part 4 rules are warranted, ATIS NRSC supports the initiation of a separate proceeding to determine ways that outage reporting burdens can be eliminated or better balance the need for effective notice of relevant communications disruptions

³³ See ATIS Comments, PS Docket Nos. 15-80, 13-75, at 15-16 (filed Jul. 30, 2021).

³⁴ In the limited number of cases where census data is not applicable to a PSAP service area, the service provider may use other approximate population data.

and the burdens associated with outage reporting. This view is consistent with a number of commenters, who support a separate comprehensive proceeding focused on Part 4.

APCO, for example, in its comments suggests that Commission inquiries about amending the outage reporting thresholds are better suited to a separate further notice in the outage notifications docket, where the Commission may develop a more thorough record on the issue.³⁵ CTIA similarly suggests an examination of this issue is warranted “to minimize confusion that would result from adopting different thresholds and obligations for different services and ensure the Commission’s rules address public safety needs.”³⁶ NENA agrees that outage reporting requirements should be revisited, but encourages the Commission to address the interconnected, complex issues associated with outage reporting for 911 and NG911 in a holistic manner in a separate proceeding.³⁷ Comtech also supports the initiation of a separate proceeding on Part 4 and recommends that this proceeding consider prior Commission findings, including the CSRIC Best Practices.³⁸

ATIS urges the Commission to consider comments filed in the Delete, Delete, Delete docket³⁹ and initiate a review of its Part 4 outage reporting rules to determine how the burdens associated with those rules could be minimized and how the rules could better balance the benefits and burdens of outage reporting.

³⁵ APCO Comments at p. 7, n.19.

³⁶ CTIA Comments at p. 5.

³⁷ NENA Comments at p. 25.

³⁸ Comtech Comments at p. 20. As part of this proceeding, ATIS would welcome the opportunity for a broad discussion regarding the maintenance of CSRIC Best Practices by the Commission.

³⁹ *See, e.g.*, USTelecom – The Broadband Association Comments at 12-13 (arguing that the FCC should broadly eliminate public safety regulations that actually pose a risk to public safety, such as outage reporting thresholds); ACA Connects – America’s Communications Association Comments at 14-16 (expressing concern that “recent changes to the Commission’s outage reporting rules...will divert scarce resources from disaster response and recovery and should therefore be reconsidered”); and INCOMPAS Comments at 13-14 (recommending that the Commission eliminate the overly burdensome PSAP outage reporting requirements).

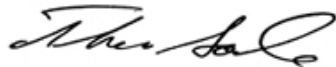
D. The Commission's Proposed NG911 Rules Would Exacerbate Existing Challenges with PSAP Notifications

ATIS supports Intrado's comments regarding PSAP notifications and the need for stakeholders to work together on further reforms of the PSAP NG911 outage notification rules. Intrado notes that APCO, NASNA, and NENA have expressed concerns that PSAPs may receive excessive alerts from multiple carriers about the same outage with limited actionable value and explains the Commission's proposed rules might make it worse.⁴⁰ Intrado notes that an unintended consequence of expanding the definition of CSPs as proposed in the *FNPRM* would be to increase the number of entities that will become subject to the new 30-minute PSAP notification requirement for OSPs. As a result, the risk of over-notification will likely increase, placing additional strain on both PSAPs and providers.⁴¹ ATIS NRSC members have received uniformly negative feedback directly from PSAPs indicating their frustration with the significant increase in the number of notifications being received under the current notification rules.

III. CONCLUSION

ATIS ESIF appreciates the opportunity to provide its input to the *FNPRM* and urges the Commission to consider the input provided above.

Respectfully submitted,



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September 17, 2025

⁴⁰ Intrado Comments at p. 8.

⁴¹ Intrado Comments at p. 8.