

May 26, 2020

To: The Honorable Kay Ivey
Governor
State Capitol
600 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36130-2751

Dear Governor Ivey,

Government officials play a vital role in serving and protecting their communities. This is especially true in times of crisis such as the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Reliable communications service is an essential lifeline during emergencies—from enabling Americans to call 911 for help to keeping communities connected by making possible services such as telehealth, telework, and distance learning. We ask that you consider the following recommendations, which will help protect the health and safety of their citizens by ensuring that the communications industry has the requisite access and resources needed to keep Americans connected during this challenging time.

First, to ensure that communications networks and services remain available to the public as well as to first responders, we ask you to review the guidance the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency updated earlier this month: [Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce and Guidelines for Executives: 911 Center Pandemic Recommendations](#).

Second, we ask you to declare the following infrastructure and entities as essential to COVID-19 response efforts and afford them all appropriate resources and access:

- Businesses and personnel that provide communications support to medical and healthcare facilities, assisted care and living facilities, and people with disabilities;
- Radio and television broadcasters, cable operators, and Internet Protocol television (IPTV) providers;
- Telecommunications relay services providers and closed captioning providers;
- Public safety communications infrastructure (e.g., land mobile radio, broadband, Wi-Fi, high frequency radio, microwave, wireline, satellite voice, video, Radio over Internet Protocol, paging, data communications systems), including infrastructure that is owned,

operated or maintained by commercial service providers in support of public safety and infrastructure in support of Emergency Communications Centers¹;

- Internet access service providers, telephone carriers, interconnected VoIP providers, mobile wireless providers, undersea cable operators, content delivery network operators, service integrators, and equipment vendors;
- Satellite operators; and
- Companies and individuals involved in the construction of new communications facilities and deployment of new and existing technology to address unprecedented levels of customer usage and close the digital divide for Americans who are sheltering at home.

Third, we ask you to keep in mind that many communications facilities and communities rely on consumer equipment on the premises, such as modems, routers, and broadband extenders, to transmit or receive health status information, security and fire alarms, automated 911 calling capabilities, and emergency alerts, warnings, and notifications. Communications support for these facilities includes distribution, installation, repair, and maintenance services for commercial and residential systems and networks; the provision, repair, and maintenance of closed-captioning services and telecommunications relay services for individuals with disabilities; and the basic repair, maintenance, and troubleshooting of communications equipment for customers with special needs. As such, consider prioritizing the distribution of personal protective equipment to communications personnel when availability permits.

Fourth, we ask you to understand that communications retail customer service personnel at service center locations are critical for onboarding customers, distributing and repairing equipment, and addressing customer issues to support individuals' remote emergency communications needs. This is especially true for low-income families and veterans as well as those without access to commercial banks. We also note this need extends to those supply chain and logistics personnel who ensure goods and products are available to these front-line employees.

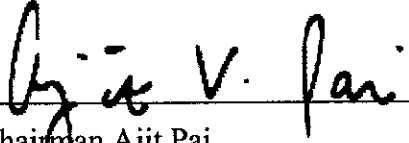
Fifth, we encourage wireless service providers, wireline service providers, and all levels of government to work together in the processing of communications network infrastructure and next generation 911 projects. These are critical to meeting health and safety objectives related to our nation's response to the pandemic. It is imperative that all government leaders take the necessary measures to ensure that the communications industry has the appropriate access and resources needed to keep Americans safe and connected during this pandemic. We have encouraged wireless service providers to identify those infrastructure projects that are most urgent to meeting the nation's health and safety needs so that governments can focus their resources on review and approval of these projects. We remain available to work with both government and service providers to meet critical communications needs during these challenging times.

Sixth and finally, we ask you to facilitate the maintenance, repair, and provisioning of communications infrastructure and services by providing online access to relevant government functions, such as the permitting process, where not already available electronically.

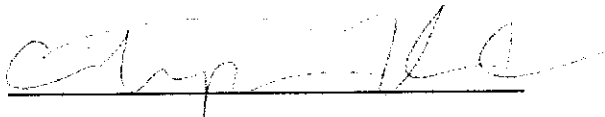
¹ Emergency Communications Centers may be known by other names, including Public Safety Answering Point, Public Safety Communications Center, Security Operations Center, or Emergency Operations Center. These centers answer 911 calls and other calls placed by landline or wireless callers (either directly or indirectly).

Thank you for considering these recommendations as you work to protect the health and well-being of your communities during this crisis. For further information or questions, please contact Justin Cain at Justin.Cain@fcc.gov or call 202-418-2924 or John O'Connor at John.OConnor@cisa.dhs.gov or call 703-235-5028.

Sincerely,



Chairman Ajit Pai
Federal Communications Commission



Director Chris Krebs
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security
Agency
Department of Homeland Security