

NENA Expresses Concern Over Consequences of International Trade Commission Decision

June 11, 2007, Arlington, VA - The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) is concerned with the ruling by the International Trade Commission (ITC) last week concerning a patent dispute between Broadcom and Qualcomm. While NENA has no interest and expresses no opinion in the patent infringement claim at issue, NENA is concerned about the consequences of the “downstream” remedy announced last week by the ITC which will have a negative impact on the delivery of 9-1-1 service for American consumers and first responder communications.

NENA, along with other leading public safety associations such as the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) International and COMCARE, testified before the ITC on March 22nd describing the adverse effects that would result from the remedy sought by Broadcom. The ITC’s decision bans the importation of a wide range of cellular handsets used by major carriers within the United States which will directly impact the delivery of E9-1-1 services to millions of individuals in the United States. A major obstacle has been created that will prevent consumers from upgrading their wireless handsets to newer models that will allow for more accurate, GPS-based location capabilities. The handsets excluded by the ITC’s order will prevent advances being made to improve indoor location capabilities needed to pinpoint the location of wireless subscribers which is particularly unfortunate in light of the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) recently announced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) directing wireless carriers to improve the ability to locate wireless 9-1-1 callers.

Additionally, the remedy announced by the ITC presents a significant obstacle for emergency response agencies to provide their responders with access public safety broadband services. This is also quite unfortunate given the efforts of the FCC, and local governments around the country, to establish wireless public safety broadband networks to improve first responder interoperable communications. Such efforts will be harmed without the ability to access the devices restricted by the ITC’s ruling.

The ITC’s ban on importation results in the public being denied new handsets that will improve the ability of 9-1-1 public safety answering points (PSAPs) to locate with greater precision victims of crime, accidents, fires, or other disasters. First responders will potentially have inferior information when trying to locate 9-1-1 callers in time of need. Additionally, first responders themselves will be denied the opportunity to use many devices that would improve interoperable first responder communications in the field. The decision of the ITC is not a positive result for public safety or the emergency calling public in the United States.

###

About the National Emergency Number Association

NENA is *The Voice of 9-1-1™*. Now celebrating its 25th year, NENA was established to promote implementation and awareness of 9-1-1 as North America’s universal emergency number. NENA has grown to become the leading professional non-profit organization dedicated solely to 9-1-1 emergency communications issues. NENA serves its more than 7,000 members in 47 chapters across the U.S., Canada and Mexico through policy advocacy, establishment of technical and operational standards, certification programs and a broad spectrum of educational offerings. Find out more at www.nena.org.