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[In Letter to FCC, Obama Administration Wants Open Standards and Networks for Public Safety](#)

[Broadband Stimulus](#), [National Broadband Plan](#)

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[Winter Casey](#), Reporter, BroadbandBreakfast.com

WASHINGTON, December 15, 2009 – A government letter sent on behalf of the Obama Administration to the agency charged with rolling out a national broadband plan repeatedly refers to the need for open platforms, standards and networks going forward in order to keep the country safe.

To best achieve the goal of interoperable, effective, reliable and affordable public safety communications systems, “we should look to public-private partnerships, which is how this country has met so many of its great challenges, in order to assist public safety’s shift away from continued reliance on a siloed, switched network services model, wholly-dedicated devices, and proprietary systems, and towards more modern networks and devices that solve problems while maintaining the high standards that public safety demands,” reads [a letter \(PDF\)](#) from NTIA chief Lawrence Strickling to FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski.

Strickling is head of the Commerce Department’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration, which is charged with dispensing most of the government-funded broadband stimulus monies. The Federal Communications Commission, however, is charged with setting the broadband plan.

“Innovative information and communication services are enabled by a layered, open platform design strategy that facilitates the development of many diverse applications and services on top of open networks built using common technical standards,” continues the letter, dated December 11.

“The use of standards-based and vendor-neutral technologies will promote network connectivity and spur the deployment of innovative applications and services on more affordable devices,” the letter reads.

“Open technical standards and protocols will facilitate the delivery of wires and wireless technologies that will promote compatibility and interoperability across agencies, jurisdictions and communities in a manner that helps that leverage legacy systems as they migrate towards newer technologies.”

The document continues by saying the “emergency services community should be able to leverage advanced call-delivery and other functions through new internetworking technologies, based on open standards, to provide a complete voice, data and video link between the 911 caller and the first responder.”

The letter focuses on the public safety, homeland security and cyber security elements of a national broadband plan. NTIA says the government should avoid being overly prescriptive on the cyber security front but instead give the private sector discretion to develop innovative security measures to meet their cyber security obligations.

A national broadband plan should “recognize the layered model that has allowed the internet to become a transformative technology that empowers people around the globe, spurs innovation, facilitates trade and commerce, and enables the free and unfettered flow of information,” the letter states.

Tagged with: [e911](#), [FCC](#), [Julius Genachowski](#), [lawrence strickling](#), [NTIA](#), [open standards](#)

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