

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

In the Matter of)
) DA No. 06-57
Impact of Hurricane Katrina)
On Communications Networks)

COMMENTS OF HARRIS CORPORATION

Harris Corporation (“Harris”) respectfully submits these comments in response to the Federal Communications Commission’s (“Commission’s” or “FCC”) *Public Notice* regarding the Independent Panel Reviewing the Impact of Hurricane Katrina on Communications Networks (“Panel”). According to the *Public Notice*, the Panel is tasked with reviewing the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the telecommunications and media infrastructure in the affected areas and will make recommendations to the Commission regarding ways to improve disaster preparedness, network reliability, and communications among first responders by June 15, 2006.¹

I. Introduction and Summary

Harris Corporation (“Harris”) is in the unique position of understanding the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the communications networks from the perspectives of several key stakeholders: the broadcasting industry, the public safety industry, and the wireless industry. Harris had initial disaster/recovery teams in place within 24 hours of the storm’s clearing. The teams worked tirelessly day-after-day for 4 months to provide a comprehensive suite of emergency communications equipment for voice, video, and data

¹ Notice of Appointment of Members to Serve on Federal Communications Commission’s Independent Panel Reviewing the Impact of Hurricane Katrina on Communications Networks; and Independent Panel’s First Meeting Scheduled for January 30, 2006, *Public Notice*, DA 06-57, January 12, 2006.

at 9 different sites, including: medical (MASH), processing centers, and command centers.

Harris supports the Commission's leadership in evaluating the impact of Katrina on the communications network. As many members of the Panel understand, because of the severity of the storm and the utter destruction of the communications network in New Orleans and the Gulfport regions—the post-disaster effort was not about “recovering” and “restoring” existing infrastructure. The post-disaster effort was about building new communications systems so that disaster-support services could be provided to members of the impacted communities. Without a viable communications network, many of the brave Americans who lived through Hurricane Katrina found themselves without access to critical information, and suffered unnecessarily as a result. We believe that Harris' experience, working with members of the local communities (from local broadcasters in New Orleans to the librarian in Harrison County), will provide the Commission with valuable insight to aid in the development of policy recommendations that will support future disaster-recovery efforts.

Harris is an international communications systems, equipment, and services company with four operating divisions that offer products and services in the microwave, broadcast, secure tactical radio, and government communications systems markets. The Harris customer base includes, both licensed and unlicensed service providers, serving a variety of markets including 802.11, 802.15, 802.16, analog and digital television, and software-defined radio. Our customers include cellular service providers, wireless ISPs, broadcasters, and agencies engaged in public safety. The following provides a sampling of Harris' efforts to assist local and state officials in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

II. Harris Contributions to the Disaster Relief Effort in Gulfport and New Orleans.

Harris played a key role in rebuilding WQRZ-FM, a low-power FM station serving Hancock County, Mississippi that was nearly destroyed by the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina. The station became the only source of information to Hancock County residents in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. It provided critical information regarding disaster recovery efforts to people in Hancock County who had no other source of information. As Hurricane Katrina approached, the Chief Engineer relocated the station's existing 100-watt FM transmitter, the Emergency Alert System, a portion of its four-bay antenna, and some studio components to the Hancock County Emergency Operations Center ("EOC") to continue broadcasts. When the storm hit on August 29, the station's tower and a 10-foot by 10-foot shed survived. In the ensuing days, Harris engineers built and shipped a turnkey radio studio system to the Hancock EOC. A Harris 1 kW FM transmitter from the Harris factory in Quincy, Illinois, was tuned and tested, crated and shipped to Hancock County. Tower climbing, line sweeping, connector installation, antenna settings, and modulation testing were just some of the other tasks performed by Harris employees at the transmitter site to help build a studio at the Hancock EOC site. The entire project was completed in just four days with less than 45 minutes of off-air time.

The Harris transmitter boosted WQRZ's signal output to 1300 watts – 13 times its previous output – thanks to special temporary authority from the Commission. WQRZ became the center of critical information for residents of Hancock County, providing health and property protection information to local residents. In addition to this effort,

Harris worked with numerous broadcasters in both the New Orleans and Gulfport areas to provide new transmitters, help re-build studios and restore operations and services to the local communities.

Harris also played a key role in providing communications capability for the emergency medical units that were dispatched to the disaster area. Most of the medial units arrived with no communications capabilities. Harris was able to establish local wired and wireless computer networks, analog voice, VOIP voice, and FAX systems that provided urgently needed connections for the transfer of medical information, consultation with other experts, and with other administration and technical personnel.

Harris personnel worked around the clock to provide continuous coverage from the disaster area and at the Harris teleport gateway in Melbourne to ensure that much needed connections were available. In addition to the medical personnel, the communications systems were used by the local citizens to contact family and friends to allow them to either locate or let them know that they survived the storm. Additionally, local, state, and federal officials made use of these communications system to contact their home offices.

Harris also provided communications systems for federal officials on special missions. In the absence of any communications infrastructure federal officials were unable to coordinate law enforcement activities and relied on the Harris equipment to help them successfully achieve their mission objectives.

III. Conclusion

Harris appreciates the opportunity to submit these comments to support the Panel's work in reviewing the impact of Hurricane Katrina on communications networks. Harris is proud of the contributions made to those local communities and looks forward to working with the Panel as it crafts recommendations to the Commission regarding ways to improve disaster preparedness, network reliability and communications among first responders.

Respectfully Submitted,

HARRIS CORPORATION

January 27, 2006