

Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet Approves 911 Safety, Broadband Mapping Legislation

The Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet today approved two bills relating to evolving Internet technology. By unanimous voice vote, the Subcommittee approved an amended version of H.R. 3403, the 911 Modernization and Public Safety Act of 2007, and a Committee Print of the "Broadband Census of America Act of 2007";

NEWS RELEASE

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

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Washington, D.C. — The Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet today approved two bills relating to evolving Internet technology. By unanimous voice vote, the Subcommittee approved an amended version of H.R. 3403, the 911 Modernization and Public Safety Act of 2007, and a Committee Print of the "Broadband Census of America Act of 2007"; The bills will now be sent to the full committee.

"Our laws must reflect advances in telecommunications technology and the ways in which Americans adapt to it," said Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. "Today we approved two important pieces of legislation that will serve the interests of consumers by enhancing public safety and taking steps to make broadband more widely available."

The 911 Modernization and Public Safety Act will ensure that consumers using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) can reach emergency 911 operators in a manner similar to landline or mobile phone users. The bill would give VoIP providers the same liability protections afforded other telecommunications providers.

The Broadband Census of America Act provides for a detailed and comprehensive census of broadband availability across the nation. The bill also directs the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to establish a grant program to assist local communities in assessing their broadband capabilities.

"The E911 legislation (H.R. 3403) is designed to ensure that a consumer calling 911 in an emergency from an Internet phone, using VoIP service, can do so with a degree of confidence matching that of traditional phone service and wireless service," said Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet. "The Committee Print for the Broadband Census of America Act reflects the growing consensus -- if not unanimity -- around the fact that current data collection methods used by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) are inadequate and highly flawed. I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their work on these bills and look forward to working together as we proceed."

The Subcommittee has held two hearings in preparation for today's markup. On May 17, 2007, the Subcommittee held a legislative hearing on a discussion draft of the Broadband Census of America Act. On September 19, 2007, the Subcommittee held a legislative hearing on H.R. 3403, the 911 Modernization and Public Safety Act.

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Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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