

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: The Use of N11 Codes and Other Abbreviated Dialing Arrangements, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

I am pleased to support this item. Much of our nation's infrastructure lies underground. Buried beneath the surface are pipelines, wires and conduits that are critical to our daily life. Excavations that disrupt these facilities not only inconvenience those who depend on them and extract a significant economic toll; they can threaten our very safety and security.

This kind of large-scale damage is preventable, if a reliable and uniform system of advance notification is available. Today we begin the process of developing and implementing a nationwide, toll-free notification system. This is a job the Commission and the Department of Transportation share under the Pipeline Safety Act. It is also a task that fits squarely within the Commission's basic mission. The very first sentence of the Communications Act states that the Act was written to make "available . . . a rapid, efficient, Nation-wide and world-wide telecommunications service . . . for the purpose of promoting safety of life and property through the use of wire and radio communication." So our charge and authority are clear. Now the need is to move ahead expeditiously—to ensure that excavators everywhere can dig safely and avoid disrupting the nation's essential services.