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## FCC RESPONDS TO TEXAS CRITICISM OVER SUPPORT FOR CELLPHONE JAMMING TEST

An FCC spokesman has responded to criticism from a spokesman for Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott over the Commission's statement that it encourages the state to proceed with a demonstration of mobile phone signal jamming technology tomorrow.

On Monday, Texas state prison officials canceled the demonstration because they said they did not want to violate a federal prohibition on use of the technology by non-federal government entities. CellAntenna Corp. had planned to demonstrate its equipment - as it did last month at a prison on South Carolina.

Jerry Strickland, communications director for Mr. Abbott, was quoted yesterday as saying, "Only in Washington can a federal agency encourage conduct it previously said was unauthorized." His remarks referred to an FCC spokesman's comment earlier in the day that the agency encouraged Texas officials to proceed with the demonstration.

In response to Mr. Strickland's comments, the FCC spokesman, Robert Kenny, said in a statement released last night, "FCC Chairman Kevin Martin understands the concerns of state and local law enforcement officials and is willing to work with them on this complex issue. My statement from earlier today was perfectly consistent with the way in which we responded to the test completed in a South Carolina prison last month. In fact, we chose not to act on a CTIA request asking us to stop the South Carolina test. Nor did we pursue any enforcement action in South Carolina, and see no reason to treat the testing of cell phone jammers in Texas prisons any differently."

In a related development, Jon Ozmint, director of the South Carolina Department of Corrections, called on Congress and the FCC today to allow state and local authorities to use mobile phone signal jamming technology, saying they should be "ashamed" that those agencies can't.

"The Federal Communications Act of 1934 was created 'for the purpose of promoting safety of life and property through the use of wire and radio communication.' By withholding surgical jamming technology from state and local law enforcement, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) violates this purpose and fails to acknowledge advancing technology," Mr. Ozmint wrote in a column published in the "The Post and Courier" newspaper in Charleston. He said that the smuggling of mobile phones into prisons is a public safety danger and said jamming signals "is 80 percent cheaper and 100 percent more effective" than using location technology to detect phones.

Mr. Ozmint also criticized the FCC for refusing an invitation to attend last month's demonstration at one of his prisons and he lashed out at the wireless industry. "From the beginning, the wireless industry has voiced two objections to using this technology in prisons: 1) interference with calls outside of prison, such as E-911 calls; and 2) interference with our own law-enforcement radios. After our demonstration, the public and the media present know that these arguments are specious," he said. "Surgical jamming does not interfere with law enforcement radios or block E-911 calls. In fact, it will not block any call or frequency outside of the prison perimeter." - Paul Kirby. [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#)

*TR Daily, December 17, 2008*

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