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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Top Tech Companies Detail Public Safety Agenda to Meet Goal of Nationwide, Interoperable Communications

Washington, DC – February 6, 2007 – The nation’s leading technology and rural technology groups today told Congress that nationwide interoperable communications for public safety officials is within reach but new measures are needed to meet the goal of interoperability as soon as possible.

The High Tech DTV Coalition asked Congress to ensure that key government timetables to transition spectrum to public safety agencies are met, that funding for interoperability grants doesn’t get caught in red tape and that the Federal Communications Commission acts promptly to establish rules that would promote the development of a nationwide, broadband public safety network in the spectrum provided to public safety.

“Congress took a landmark step last year towards ensuring that public safety officials have the means they need to communicate in times of crisis, but the job isn’t complete,” said Jeffrey Connaughton, executive director of the High Tech DTV Coalition. “We now need to build on the success of the DTV Act by keeping to the timetable for conversion of 24 MHz of spectrum for public safety and by ensuring that the 24 MHz of spectrum is used efficiently and effectively.”

In advance of the Senate Commerce Committee’s hearing on interoperability this week, the Coalition set forth its public safety interoperability agenda in a letter to Chairman Daniel Inouye and Vice Chairman Ted Stevens.

The four-pronged plan to further strengthen the nation’s public safety efforts and meet the Department of Homeland Security’s goal of interoperable communications as soon as possible includes:

- **DTV Transition Binding Date.** Congress should stick to the February 17, 2009 “hard date” to complete the national transition to digital television as it is critical to ensuring that public safety is provided the 24 MHz of additional spectrum that the 9/11 Commission concluded is needed for interoperability.
- **Nationwide Public Safety Network.** The FCC should promote the construction of a nationwide, interoperable broadband public safety network in the 24 MHz of spectrum provided by Congress by issuing a single national license to a public safety licensee.

- **Broadband Technology.** At least half, if not more, of the 24 MHz of spectrum should be designated for broadband services. That step would offer first responders the latest in next-generation communications technology that would support a variety of data and video applications. Public safety is on record as supporting such a designation, and we urge prompt adoption of rules that would permit such uses.
- **Interoperability Funding.** The Department of Commerce, working with the Department of Homeland Security, should meet the Sept. 30, 2007 Congressional deadline to award approximately \$1 billion in grants to public safety agencies to deploy interoperable communications systems. It is essential that these grants not get delayed or caught in bureaucratic red tape. In addition, the Senate should quickly follow the House and pass legislation approving additional funding for public safety agencies to meet the DHS goal of achieving interoperability.

The Coalition also expressed concern to Congress about a proposal that runs counter to the objective of deploying an effective interoperable system. Specifically, they raised concerns about an extremely risky business venture proposed by a new company known as Cyren Call that would have the Federal Government underwrite investment in a commercial network used to provide communications services to public safety. The Cyren Call plan is clearly designed to benefit Cyren Call's owners and investors while placing American taxpayers at risk. Moreover, the Coalition notes that Cyren Call's proposal is inconsistent with the *Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005* (the "DTV Act") and would derail the entire DTV transition process, putting in jeopardy the 24 MHz of spectrum that public safety needs.

The High Tech DTV Coalition today released a report conducted by Criterion Economics which highlights the concerns about Cyren Call and offers strong support for the actions recommended here. The report, entitled "Improving Public Safety Communications: An Analysis of Alternative Approaches," concluded that the 24 MHz of spectrum provided to public safety will support a nationwide, interoperable broadband network that fully meets the needs of public safety without the need for additional spectrum.

The report also concluded that adopting the Cyren Call proposal would harm consumers and taxpayers by delaying Congress' plan to transition existing television services to new digital technology and depriving the U.S. Treasury of the revenues the auction would generate to fund public safety interoperability and deficit reduction.

The report is available online at:

http://criterioneconomics.com/docs/Improving_PublicSafetyComm_020507.pdf

For additional information about the Criterion report, please contact Jeffrey Eisenach at jeisenach@criterioneconomics.com.

About the High Tech DTV Coalition

The High Tech DTV Coalition includes leading trade associations and companies representing the wireless, computer, telecommunications equipment, semiconductor, software and manufacturing sectors of the U.S. economy. Members include the Information Technology Industry Council, National Association of Manufacturers, Business Software Alliance, the Semiconductor Industry Association, the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association, the Rural Telecommunications Group, TechNet and the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies. For more information, visit www.dtvcoalition.com.