

**Recommendation of the Consumer Advisory Committee of the Federal
Communications Commission**

Emergency Alerts and Crisis Telecommunications
[FCC dockets 04-296 and 06-119]

Recent experiences of natural disasters have made Americans even more aware of the importance of a fully effective national system for emergency alerts and preparedness. To reach this goal, the President has issued a mandate [Executive Order 6/26/06] for improved nationwide capacity to warn citizens of potential dangers and enable local and regional preparedness, response, and relief management.

As the authorized agency for national Emergency Alert System operations, the Federal Communications Commission works with other agencies to develop telecommunications plans for readiness and capacity to help protect all citizens in crisis situations.

Members of the Consumer Advisory Committee urge that FCC crisis telecommunications planning addresses not only emergency telecom infrastructure but also the critical “last link” – the local connection process which transforms official alert messages into timely notice and clear guidance for the safety of communities, households, and individuals.

Delivering information to emergency management officials and responders is necessary, but it is not sufficient. Crisis telecom preparation must include plans and means to reach all residents, including those facing barriers of physical disability, language, geographic isolation, and limited telecom access.

Current indicators show that at this time too many communities, especially those with rural and underserved populations, are not fully prepared to receive, authenticate and locally distribute relevant information from governmental emergency alert messages.

Therefore we recommend that FCC crisis telecommunications policies advance the understanding and adoption of common alerting protocols and programs referenced in the President’s Executive Order.

We further recommend that the FCC should advocate and support the development of technical means and clear models for communities to receive emergency information and effectively disseminate relevant alerts and instructions to every community member.

Adopted November 3, 2006