

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN**

Re: Improving Wireless Emergency Alerts and Community-Initiated Alerting, PS Docket No. 15-91

Last Friday evening, our hearts collectively skipped a beat as we saw and listened in disbelief the images and commentary of the horrific, violent attacks on one of our country's oldest allies. Reports of how Parisians used their mobile phones to call for help, access services on social media networks, receive updates on the dangers in specific geographic areas, and to tell family and friends where they can find safe havens are tragically powerful reminders that, when faced with a dire emergency, people increasingly turn first to advanced mobile technologies.

The one ray of positive news we are able to share in this dreadful aftermath, is that this Commission is showing great leadership in ensuring the wireless industry and public safety communities keep pace with growing consumer expectations through the adoption of rules which promote text-to-911 and improve wireless location accuracy. I wish to also commend Chairman Wheeler for identifying steps Congress can take to help states facilitate the deployment of Next Generation 911 services.

With today's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, we are taking strides to improve the usefulness of yet another important public safety tool – the Wireless Emergency Alert System or WEA for short. Our federal government has been working to deploy this public-private partnership for several years. Back in 2005, the Department of Homeland Security established the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, or START, and one of START's top priorities is a research and development program that would drive wider use of wireless alerts. Last fall, our advisory committee, CSRIC, worked with START to develop recommendations for the Commission to consider. This item turns those recommendations into rule proposals that fall into three key areas.

The first, is to enhance the content of WEA messages, by allowing them to be longer than 90 characters and more accessible to all communities. We ask whether we should allow these messages to contain phone numbers, URLs, multimedia, and multilingual content. The item also properly acknowledges MMTC's advocacy in highlighting the importance of providing emergency alerts in languages other than English.

Second is the improvement of the geo-targeting of Wireless Emergency Alerts. Right now, our rules prevent providers from transmitting WEA messages to areas larger than county level. We want WEA alerts to be much more localized so messages only reach the actual people who are at risk. Otherwise, those who repeatedly get alerts that may not be relevant for them may one day actually ignore alerts that directly impact their health and safety. So we ask whether we should limit WEA alerts, to finer geospatial areas such as geocodes, circles, or polygons.

Third is the facilitation of local WEA system testing. Proficiency building exercises are key to successful emergency management programs. We seek comment on whether any new or revised technical standards or processes, would be necessary to facilitate state and local testing.

In sum, this Notice puts our country on a path to improve the effectiveness of the WEA system for public safety officials and the citizens they serve. I thank Admiral Simpson, and the dedicated staff of the Public Safety Homeland Security Bureau, for their good work on this Notice, and for the presentation this morning.