

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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November 2, 2015

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

We urge you to make sure that emergency alerts are available to all Americans—regardless of what language they speak. The Commission first asked whether the Emergency Alert System (EAS) should include alerts in multiple languages nearly a decade ago. Indeed, the Commission has reviewed this issue three times and has a robust record on which to make a decision. The time has come for the Commission to act on this critically important issue.

With extreme weather events due to climate change on the rise, it is paramount that all people in the United States have equal access to lifesaving emergency alerts. As of 2011, the Census Bureau reports that 21 percent of the U.S. population speaks a language other than English at home. Our country's experiences with Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy make the importance of these alerts all too evident. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) supports the extension of alerting to the non-English speaking population, and the State of Florida already broadcasts emergency alerts in both English and Spanish.

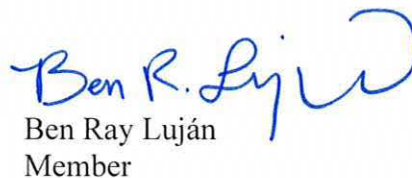
The FCC and industry have already taken the initial steps towards implementing a multi-lingual emergency alert system. EAS participants are now required to make sure the devices they support can receive and retransmit Common Alerting Protocol (CAP)-formatted EAS alert messages. The Commission itself has noted that CAP allows for the inclusion of multiple translations of an alert. We commend the FCC for making this first-step toward equally protecting non-English speakers. But we believe the FCC should take the next step before the next disaster strikes.

We appreciate the FCC's ongoing efforts to protect the U.S. population during times of emergency and crisis. We look forward to the FCC ensuring that all members of our society have equal access to these lifesaving alerts.

Sincerely,



G. K. Butterfield
Member



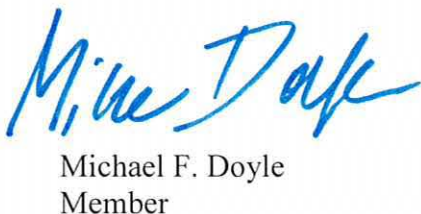
Ben Ray Luján
Member



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member



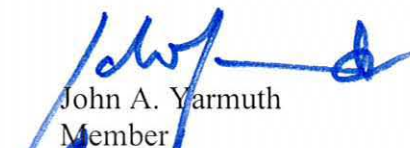
Anna-G. Eshoo
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Communications &
Technology



Michael F. Doyle
Member



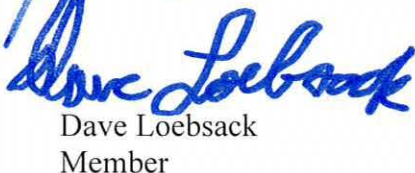
Peter Welch
Member



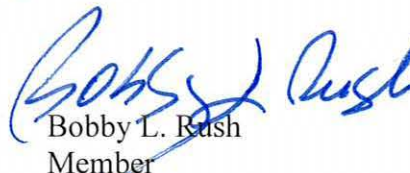
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cc: The Honorable Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission

The Honorable Michael O'Rielly
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission