

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Amendments to Part 4 of the Commission's Rules Concerning Disruptions to Communications*, PS Docket No. 15-80, Second Report and Order (March 17, 2021)

During an emergency, fast and effective coordination—across levels of government, among first responders, and across industries—can save both lives and property. I am pleased to approve this Order, which promotes coordination and information sharing among officials in emergency management and first responder support roles in the states, the District of Columbia, Tribal nations, territories, and the federal government by giving them access the Network Outage Reporting System (NORS) and Disaster Information Reporting System (DIRS).

Last year, before the pandemic curtailed our travels, I visited Puerto Rico to learn more about improving the resiliency of communications networks since Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Many individuals and representatives from local government, the labor movement, the healthcare and education sectors, disaster recovery workers, and the communications sector shared their on-the-ground experiences with me. Those conversations highlighted an important theme that I have seen play out a number of times since then: disasters rarely impact just one or a few parts of our day-to-day lives. If a weather event has caused power outages, it is probably also affecting communications networks, water services, and other systems we rely on every day. Effective disaster response and recovery requires all levels of government to see the big picture.

Today's decision will help facilitate the predictable, fast, and efficient information sharing that seeing the big picture requires. The severe and unusual weather that many parts of the United States have experienced in recent weeks underscores the need to move quickly and decisively on issues around network resiliency. We know that climate change will make natural disasters more frequent and more severe, making steps like today's Order all the more urgent. Many thanks to the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau for their hard work preparing this Order.