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For Immediate Release

**FCC PROPOSES ACTION TO IMPROVE VISUAL EMERGENCY
ALERT SYSTEM MESSAGES**

WASHINGTON, December 14, 2021—The Federal Communications Commission today proposed action to improve the clarity and accessibility of visual Emergency Alert System messages to the public, particularly to people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and launched an examination of broader measures to enhance the system’s overall functionality and accessibility.

First, in a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking adopted today, the Commission proposed rule changes to improve the clarity and descriptiveness of the visual message that appears on television during nationwide Emergency Alert System tests in order to better inform members of the public who are unable to access the test’s audio message.

Second, the Commission proposed to require broadcasters, cable systems, and other Emergency Alert System participants to check for and use, when available, the internet-based version of alerts rather than the legacy “over-the-air” version when transmitting alerts to the public. The Emergency Alert System is comprised of both a legacy broadcast system and an internet-based Common Alerting Protocol system, with the latter offering superior visual messaging capabilities.

Third, in a Notice of Inquiry adopted today, the Commission sought comment on whether the legacy Emergency Alert System architecture can be modified, augmented, or redesigned to enable government alert originators to relay more visual information as part of, or in parallel with, their alert message. The Commission is also seeking comment on ways to improve the legacy Emergency Alert System architecture to enable more functionality within the system as a whole.

Action by the Commission December 14, 2021 by Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and a Notice of Inquiry (FCC 21-125). Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, and Simington approving. Chairwoman Rosenworcel issuing a separate statement.

PS Docket No. 15-94

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

