

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Wireless Emergency Alerts*, PS Docket No. 15-91; *Amendments to Part 11 of the Commission's Rules Regarding the Emergency Alert System*, PS Docket No. 15-94

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs) save lives. From a National Weather Service warning about an approaching hurricane, to AMBER alerts that bring a child home safely, in the past decade emergency managers have sent nearly 63,000 alerts aimed at keeping the public safe.

But an ineffective WEA system is no system at all. If emergency managers cannot count on the system to deliver their messages on-time and to the intended area—or if the public loses trust in WEAs' reliability—officials and the public will opt out. Even now, approximately 62 percent of authorized emergency management agencies have never used the WEA system. And a system that delivers few alerts to a dwindling audience becomes an afterthought rather than a life-saving tool.

Last summer, I had the opportunity to meet with first responders and public safety officials that were fighting the fast-moving Dixie Fire, one of the largest wildfires in California history. The devastation was unimaginable. The entire town of Greenville was wiped out and needed to be evacuated on short notice. I walked down the streets in Greenville just a day after the fire moved through there. The paved roads crunched under foot from baking in the fire's extreme heat. Melted aluminum flowed away from burnt out cars. Houses were reduced to crisscrossing rows of nails on the ground.

The WEA system was designed for precisely this sort of situation: when lives and property are at stake, when a large number of Americans need to receive instructions, and when time is of the essence. Yet for years there have been reports that some officials in California chose not to use WEA because it lacks precise targeting. They feared the unintended consequences of alerting too many residents to evacuate. That is why the FCC must do all it can to ensure that public safety officials know they can rely on the system when it matters most.

So I am pleased that Chairwoman Rosenworcel identified this issue and brought this item forward. Today's Notice seeks comment on the proposal that participating Commercial Mobile Service (CMS) providers file public reports on WEA's reliability, speed, and accuracy, in order to provide emergency management agencies with more detail on key WEA performance characteristics. But assessing the current state of play is only half the job, which is why I also support seeking comment on ways to improve WEA following the nationwide test in 2021. And I look forward to continuing to work with all stakeholders to ensure that this life-saving technology reaches its full potential.

In closing, I want to thank the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau for its work on the item. It has my support.