

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

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

The time is right for the Federal Communications Commission to move forward in developing a record on performance reporting and further improvements to the speed and reliability of Wireless Emergency Alerts. After all, one of the core purposes Congress identified in creating the Federal Communications Commission was to promote the safety of life and property through the use of wire and radio communication.¹ For the past 10 years, Wireless Emergency Alerts have been a tremendous innovation and one of the most important tools to warn the public about dangerous and critical situations using a consumer's mobile device. These messages save lives—through alerts such as a tornado or winter storm warning—and reconnect families through Amber and Silver alerts.

But, they are not perfect. Not everyone receives these alerts. They may be delivered outside of the targeted emergency area. Or, those who do receive them may not do so in a timely fashion, depriving recipients of precious seconds to prepare in the case of emergency. This is especially important for low-income and other high-risk individuals that disproportionately rely solely on their mobile devices for critical information and may reside in higher risk communities.

The good news is our Wireless Emergency Alert system works. Following a 2021 nationwide test, the Commission found that approximately 90 percent of respondents received the test messages, and received them within two minutes of transmission. That is fantastic, and I again credit the Commission staff and our outside partners on their work. But, we cannot and must not rest until we are at 100 percent. We need to ensure that all eligible individuals within a target area are receiving these important alerts, and receiving them as quickly as possible.

In order to do that, we need to know how the various Commercial Mobile Service partners that distribute the Wireless Emergency Alerts are performing. For example, what are the Wireless Emergency Alerts' reliability, speed, and accuracy? Only then can we further improve Wireless Emergency Alerts to ensure that everyone benefits from this valuable system.

So, I support refreshing the record in this Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to provide the Commission information and data necessary to continue to monitor and improve this important system. But, at the same time, I want to stress the need for interested stakeholders to actually participate in this proceeding. The Commission has twice already sought comment on similar proposals, but the record was far from robust. That can't happen again. We need participants to help us craft the best possible system, and without comments, our decision won't be as informed as it could be.

We also need stakeholders to comment on the various benefits and burdens of any performance reporting regime. We need to balance our very real need to have accurate information to improve the program with the need to ensure that any obligations do not disincentivize wireless and other providers from participating in the Wireless Emergency Alert system. Therefore, I'm thankful that the Chairwoman agreed to my request to seek additional comment on the cost-benefit section. These changes will ensure that the Commission's Office of Economics and Analytics has the information necessary to develop a proper cost-benefit analysis as the Commission weighs its options going forward.

I look forward to reviewing the record that develops following this item, and thank the Chairwoman, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, and all Commission staff that worked diligently on this item. It has my support.

¹ 47 U.S.C. § 151.