

## **Carr Calls for the FCC to Replace the 2016 Voluntary Wireless Resiliency Framework with New Rules for Disasters**

*Proposal Would Create Stronger, Enforceable Protections for Consumers During Disasters, Including New Regulations Covering Roaming*

WASHINGTON, DC, May 16, 2022—Today, Commissioner Brendan Carr called for the FCC to adopt new rules that will promote consumer access to robust, resilient wireless networks during disasters at an event hosted by the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO). Carr was joined at the event by Jack Varnado, 911 Director of the Livingston Parish Sheriff’s Office in Louisiana, as well as Michele Abbott, Communication and Training Coordinator, Kansas 911 Coordinating Council.

During the event, Carr noted Chairwoman Rosenworcel’s leadership on public safety issues, including her invitation for Carr to join her in Louisiana after Hurricane Ida. During that visit, community leaders and public safety officials, including Director Varnado, identified ways the FCC can further improve network reliability during disasters. Much of that discussion focused on more seamless roaming. Carr’s decision today builds on the ideas he learned during that visit as well as meetings with other public safety officials and the record that has developed in response to the FCC’s 2021 Resilient Networks [Notice](#).

“America’s wireless providers have led the world in building robust, reliable communications networks,” Carr said. “In the decade since Superstorm Sandy, the wireless industry’s billions of dollars in investments have helped wireless customers stay in touch and reach out for help during disasters. This has without a doubt promoted public safety and improved lives.

“I commend the wireless industry for stepping up to the plate back in 2016 with a voluntary wireless resiliency framework. With the passage of time and experience learned under this framework, I believe it is time for the FCC to build and expand upon that success. That is why I am announcing my support for the FCC to replace the voluntary framework with new rules that will provide consumers with strong, enforceable protections. This step will help ensure that even more Americans can reach public safety officials, loved ones, or others that can help during disaster scenarios where seconds can make all the difference. Now is the right time to move forward with an Order that tracks this approach because we are only a short time away from the start of the 2022 hurricane season and communities are already experiencing devastating wildfires.”

Specifically, Carr proposes adopting new FCC rules to achieve the following objectives:

- **Require Wireless Providers to Participate in the Wireless Resiliency Framework**
  - Participation in the framework is currently voluntary and Carr proposes adopting a new rule that expands the framework to cover additional facilities-based wireless providers.
- **Expand the Types of Events That Would Trigger Activation of the Framework**
  - Today, the voluntary framework is only triggered if both ESF-2 *and* DIRS are activated.
  - Carr supports expanding this trigger to situations where ESF-2 *or* DIRS are activated.

- Additionally, Carr supports allowing certain state level disaster declarations to trigger the framework when FCC public safety officials determine that it is appropriate.
- **Mandate Roaming During Disaster Arrangements**
  - The current framework enables carriers to roam on another provider's network in certain, defined scenarios.
  - Carr supports adopting a new rule that would require providers to establish the arrangements necessary to facilitate roaming during a disaster.
- **Ensure an Effective Roaming During Disaster Regime**
  - Carr also emphasized the need for periodic testing of roaming capabilities to ensure roaming will work when it matters most.
  - Carr also urged adoption of transparency and reporting obligations that can provide insight into the effectiveness of disaster roaming.

## Background

In December 2016, the Commission adopted an Order expressing its support for a voluntary industry commitment to promote resilient wireless communications and situational awareness during disasters. This commitment is now called the [Wireless Resiliency Cooperative Framework](#). In 2018, following Hurricane Michael, the Commission launched a comprehensive review of the framework and sought information from carriers about the implementation of these measures and other best practices. Last September, in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida, the Commission adopted a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to revisit the framework, among other issues.

In addition to gathering public comment on these issues, Carr's views are informed by experience he has gained in the field following disasters. In 2018, Carr [traveled](#) to the Florida panhandle after Hurricane Michael where he spent 48 hours with crews working to restore service. Last August, Carr joined first responders in northern California where he discussed the communications needs of the roughly 6,000 firefighters battling the Dixie Fire. Last September, Carr [joined](#) Chairwoman Rosenworcel in Louisiana following Hurricane Ida where officials on the ground described how network outages impacted their ability to respond to calls for help both during and in the aftermath of the storm. During that Louisiana visit, public safety officials advocated for a more seamless approach to roaming during disasters.

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