

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

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

Every time I make a statement about our emergency alert system, there is, unfortunately, a too-recent extreme weather event to turn to that illustrates its importance. Days before the five-year anniversary of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, Hurricane Fiona barreled over the island, bringing more than 20 inches of rain, causing flash flooding, triggering mudslides, and leaving the entire territory without power. The same weekend, the remnants of a typhoon caused one of the strongest storms in more than a decade to strike Alaska, causing hurricane-force winds and dangerous coastal flooding. And right now, we see severe damage being caused by Hurricane Ian in Florida and up the East Coast. My thoughts and prayers go out to all affected. These events affect every corner of our country. It has never been more important for all Americans to have timely, clear, and detailed notice of emergency events.

The rules we adopt today help serve that goal. The Order makes sure that, when available, broadcasters and MVPDs will transmit alerts in the IP-based Common Alerting Protocol ("CAP") format, rather than the legacy format. CAP alerts enable the agency initiating the alert to provide more detailed information and, especially important for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, ensure that all of that information is included in the visual alert displayed on the TV screen, as well as the audio alert. Even if not all agencies are using the CAP format yet, it is still important that our EAS Participants begin to check for these alerts, to future-proof the system going forward. I also support the common-sense updates the Order makes to the prescribed language corresponding to the three national EAS alert codes. With these rules in place, millions of Americans will benefit from clearer and more detailed information during emergencies.

Thank you to the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau for their work on this important item.