

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: Review of the Emergency Alert System, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

September 11 and events in this country since have highlighted the need for a warning system which affords national as well as state and local authorities the capability to provide emergency communications and information to the American public. The EAS serves as our primary alert system today for everything from weather emergencies to Amber alerts to save abducted children.

The Commission asked its Media Security and Reliability Council to examine the best means to reach the broadest possible population with emergency and public safety information. We also benefited in our deliberations from the analysis and recommendations of the Partnership for Public Warning, a public-private partnership whose goal is to increase emergency preparedness. These groups addressed shortcomings in the current EAS, including, among others, the need to upgrade the system and enhance its use for providing state and local, as well as national, emergency information. They considered the important goal of finding ways to integrate diverse technologies so people can receive information in myriad ways. And these expert committees concluded that while improvements to the EAS are needed, it remains integral to our national warning system.

I appreciate my colleagues' willingness to accelerate action on these recommendations through an NPRM rather than a start-from-scratch Notice of Inquiry. The issues on which we seek comment, in addition to the ones I've already mentioned, include bringing our warning system into the digital era, ensuring the security of the EAS, and addressing how best to provide emergency information to all segments of our population, including those with disabilities and those whose primary language is not English. We unfortunately do not have the luxury of time in these efforts. I vote for this item with the understanding that we will work aggressively in partnership with other government agencies, industry, and all stakeholders to promote a comprehensive national public warning capability.