

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Improving Wireless Emergency Alerts and Community-Initiated Alerting*, PS Docket No. 15-91.

Just last week we had a cruel reminder that when the unthinkable occurs our security so often depends on connectivity. While the threats we face are new, there is nothing novel about how we rely on communications to help keep us safe.

For decades in this country the iconic beeps of the Emergency Broadcast System kept us informed and aware of local hazards and emergencies. Over time, this morphed into the Emergency Alert System, which can be used to address national, regional, and community crises. Nearly a decade ago, in the Warning Alert and Response Network Act, Congress extended these efforts beyond the television screen to the screens on our mobile devices—and set the stage for a new class of emergency notification: Wireless Emergency Alerts.

This made good sense when this law was passed—but it makes even better sense today. After all, we now have more mobile phones in this country than people. They are in our pockets and purses; they are by our bedsides at night; they are where we download and deposit every detail of our digital lives. We use these devices to help keep us informed, aware, and safe.

So the policies we have in place to support Wireless Emergency Alerts deserve an update. They need to be refreshed to reflect our reliance on mobile devices and their unique ability to keep us informed when disaster strikes. This rulemaking does just that. It proposes more information in Wireless Emergency Alert messages and more targeted geographical delivery of those messages. In addition, it recommends expanded testing opportunities for state and local public safety authorities.

This rulemaking is real progress. But I also hope progress continues on other fronts. Because we can strengthen our security even further by having active FM chips in our smartphones. There are market developments right now that are making these chips more available—and we should encourage these industry discussions to continue.

While technology changes, the power of communications to support our security is enduring. What is also unbroken is our resolve in the face of new threats—and our need to always update our communications policies to help keep us safe.