

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

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

For the Emergency Alert System (EAS) to be effective, two conditions must be met: First, the public must know what emergency alerts are—what they sound or look like and what they signify. Second, Americans must have confidence that when they hear or see an emergency alert, they can rely and act on the potentially life-saving information that's provided. These essential conditions are at the heart of today's decision.

Although the beeps and screeches of EAS signals are known by many of us, first responders recognize a need to ensure the public is familiar with these alerts. Indeed, EAS participants have urged the Commission to allow the broadcast of public service announcements (PSAs) that include the EAS Attention Signal as one educational tool. For example, New York City's Emergency Management Department notes that people with cognitive disabilities, as well as those who are hard of hearing, would benefit from EAS PSAs.

Many organizations have created such PSAs. But our rules currently prevent alert tones from being used in PSAs given our concern about alert fatigue and commercial actors potentially misusing signals to get the attention of consumers' eyes or ears. Over the past few years, we've dealt with the tension between our rule and the need for educational PSAs by issuing a string of condition-laden waivers to select groups. Given our experience under these waivers, I am glad that we are now codifying our process for the use of alert tones in these PSAs. And we do so in a way that allows the entities with substantial expertise on emergency alerts, such as FEMA and local emergency management agencies, to determine their appropriate use.

We all know that false alerts can shake Americans' confidence in the emergency alert system. And after what happened in Hawaii a few months ago, we've seen the panic and harm that a false alert can cause. So I want to thank my colleagues for agreeing to two changes to today's decision that will help us act on some lessons learned. First, we are now moving straight to a rule that requires EAS participants to inform the FCC when they know they've transmitted a false alert, rather than seeking comment on the idea for a second time. Second, in the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau's report on the Hawaii false alert, agency staff recommended that states develop standard operating procedures for responding to false alerts. So I am glad that my colleagues have agreed to propose implementing this recommendation through our review of state EAS plans, rather than only seeking comment on doing so.

I want to thank my colleagues for agreeing to these changes, which can help strengthen our EAS system and Americans' confidence in these alerts. Thank you as well to the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau for its work on the item. It has my support.