

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Review of Rules and Requirements for Priority Services, National Security Emergency Preparedness Telecommunications Service Priority System, NTIA Petition for Rulemaking to Revise the Rules for Wireless Priority Service, NTIA Petition for Rulemaking to Revise the Rules for the Telecommunications Service Priority System, PS Docket No. 20-187, Report and Order (May 19, 2022).*

We know that another hurricane season is coming. What we need to know is that the backbone of our defense – National Security and Emergency Preparedness personnel – can utilize any available technology during any emergency to engage in any critical communication.

Today’s decision brings us closer to that goal. It modernizes the FCC’s priority services rules to reflect changes that have occurred in communications technology and the services’ administrative framework since the Commission first enacted these rules. The item updates our rules to cover next-generation communications technology – voice, data, and video communications. It prioritizes critical communications regardless of network congestion, which tends to be highest when disaster strikes. And it eliminates otherwise outdated and unnecessary requirements for priority services providers. The revised rules will increase emergency personnel’s flexibility when communicating, and improve the efficiency of those communications during and after national security threats. The item therefore has my support.

When disaster strikes, the nation must work together to mitigate the damage and recover quickly. The item highlights that the FCC, together with DHS and other agencies, is a vital partner in safeguarding our nation during times of crisis and ensuring effective disaster recovery. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues and other federal agencies to further advance our national security interests – whether those involve enhancing our networks’ resilience, eradicating suspicious network equipment, or ensuring that our emergency respondents have pole position in our networks during emergencies. I thank the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau for their hard work on this item.