

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Amendment of Part 11 of the Commission's Rules Regarding the Emergency Alert System; Wireless Emergency Alerts*, PS Docket Nos. 15-94, Report and Order (September 29, 2022)

At this very moment, Hurricane Ian is racing across Florida. A few weeks ago, one of its predecessors, Hurricane Fiona, did damage in Puerto Rico. A year ago, it was Hurricane Ida that came ashore and wreaked havoc in Louisiana. Commissioner Carr and I saw the aftermath of that storm when we visited the Bayou state last year. And of course just a few years before that, Hurricane Maria barreled through Puerto Rico, leaving historic destruction in its wake, destruction that I also saw in person—along with the resilience of the people and communities affected.

There is a pattern here. Climate change is making storms more frequent, more dangerous, and more damaging. We need to respond in kind. That's because keeping communications networks up and running can save lives. Ensuring they deliver the right emergency information to people at the right time can keep communities safe. So today we update our Emergency Alert System to make sure the messages it provides are clear for everyone.

To understand why, it is important to know that when we turn on the television screens to get information about an impending weather event or other disaster there is both a recorded EAS message and a text crawl. To avoid confusion, this should be the same information. But because of the nature of legacy television architecture, the recorded message does not always match the visual text. It often contains less information and this has resulted in problems, especially for people with disabilities who may be uniquely vulnerable in disaster situations.

Today we end that confusion. We clean up this mismatch by requiring EAS participants to check whether the newest, internet-based protocol version of an alert exists and to use it if it does. This is valuable because this version provides more details, like how those who receive it should respond to the emergency. These actions matter because they modernize a key system for disaster response. In light of the growing frequency of devastating weather events, it is essential we do so.

Thank you to the staff responsible for this effort to make these alerts both clearer and more accessible, including Maureen Bizhko, Steve Carpenter, John Evanoff, Chris Fedeli, David Furth, Deb Jordan, Nicole McGinnis, Dave Munson, Austin Randazzo, and David Sieradzki from the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau; Doug Klein, Marcus Maher, and Bill Richardson from the Office of General Counsel; Chuck Needy, Emily Talaga, and Aleks Yankelevich from the Office of Economics and Analytics; Suzy Singleton and William Wallace from the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau; Hillary DeNigro, Brendan Holland, Evan Morris, and Maria Mularkey from the Media Bureau; Eric Ehrenreich, Sharon Lee, Jeremy Marcus, Philip Rosario, and Ashley Tyson from the Enforcement Bureau; Zachary Ross from the Wireline Competition Bureau; and Chana Wilkerson from the Office of Communications Business Opportunities.