

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Wireless Emergency Alerts*, PS Docket No. 15-91; *Amendments to Part 11 of the Commission's Rules Regarding the Emergency Alert System*, PS Docket No. 15-94; Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (April 20, 2023)

It is the worst nightmare of any parent. Your child has gone missing. I cannot imagine the horror. Nor can I imagine the waves of relief when they are found. During the last decade, as Wireless Emergency Alerts went mainstream, more than 130 children have been rescued and saved from harm. Countless other children and adults have had their lives saved because these alerts gave them the notice they needed to take shelter in a storm or evacuate in advance of deadly fire and floods.

Over the last ten years, more than 78,000 Wireless Emergency Alerts have been issued in the United States. By now we are not just familiar with them, they have become part of the fabric of modern life, much like the mobile phones that are always with us, in our palms, pockets, and purses. It can be easy to forget that this alert system for public safety is still relatively new. But it is important to remember this is a system we can still improve.

That is why today we have a series of proposals to enhance the accessibility of Wireless Emergency Alerts. This effort starts with language. Right now, these alerts can only be sent in English and Spanish. But I think we can do more to reach more people in more places with emergency information. In fact, I know we can.

A big reason for this is that New York State Attorney General Letitia James—who joined us today—brought to our attention how expanded multilingual alerting can save lives. In a letter she wrote late last year, she highlighted how during Hurricane Ida nearly all of those who lost their lives in rising floodwaters in New York spoke languages other than English and Spanish. The Wireless Emergency Alerts never reached this population. She called on us to do more and noted how the New York City Emergency Management Department has developed an application that provides alerting in English and 13 other languages. It proves if we are creative we can find a way to do this—and we can save more lives.

Another reason I know we can do better is that in advance of today's rulemaking I wrote to the nine largest providers of Wireless Emergency Alerts to inquire about what more can be done to have these alerts available in more languages. Their responses informed this effort, and I am hopeful they will speed this process.

But we're not stopping there. Because there are other improvements we can make. We propose a new database to increase transparency and track participation in Wireless Emergency Alerts along with performance information like reliability, speed, and location accuracy. And, ending where I began, we ask about sending thumbnail-sized images in alerts, noting that it would be especially effective for those involving missing children.

In short, we can do some real good here. We can improve Wireless Emergency Alerts and make this relatively new tool for public safety more powerful, more accessible, more accurate, and more effective. So let's get to it.

I want to thank the staff responsible for this effort including Nicole McGinnis, Austin Randazzo, Erika Olsen, James Wiley, Shabbir Hamid, Michael Antonino, David Kirschner, Tara Shostek, Haille Laws, Ahmed Lajouji, Steven Carpenter, and David Sieradzki from the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau; Christina Clearwater and Garnet Hanley from the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau; Suzy Rosen Singleton and William David Wallace from the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau; Victoria Randazzo, Jeremy Marcus, and Ryan McDonald from the Enforcement Bureau; Chana Wilkerson from the Office of Communications Business Opportunities; Aleks Yankelovich, Craig Stroup, Emily Talega, and Cher Li from the Office of Economics and Analytics; William Huber, Elliot Tarloff, Douglas Klein, and William Richardson from the Office of General Counsel.