

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Resilient Networks; Amendments to Part 4 of the Commission's Rules Concerning Disruptions to Communications; New Part 4 of the Commission's Rules Concerning Disruptions to Communications*, PS Docket Nos. 21-346 and 15-80, ET Docket No. 04-35, Second Report and Order and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (January 25, 2024)

We live in a world with wild weather. Dramatic fires, floods, hurricanes, and blizzards are occurring more frequently and doing more damage than ever before. When these storms reach us we reach for the phone, a screen, a radio, anyone or anything who can tell us what is going on and provide help when conditions are truly dire.

In short, when disaster strikes, you want communications to work. That is why for more than a decade and a half the Federal Communications Commission has had something called the Disaster Information Reporting System, or DIRS for short. Through DIRS, communications providers voluntarily share with the FCC information about the operational status of their networks. This data is absolutely vital. When a storm hits, it means we have information that we can share with other federal agencies as well as state and local first responders to assist those on the ground with facts about where disconnections have occurred, where operations are vulnerable, and where restoration efforts are required.

But there are gaps in this data. Not every provider files this data with us. Not every technology is covered by our rules. I think these gaps are unacceptable. Everyone needs communications to work in crisis. So we need to close them.

Today we start that process. We make it mandatory for voice and cable providers to report their network operational status daily when DIRS is being used during a disaster. In order to avoid duplication, we make clear that when DIRS is activated, providers will not also have to file the same information in our required system for outage reporting, known as the Network Outage Reporting System, or NORs. But because we know that every storm is an opportunity to learn about what we can do better to keep communications up and running in disaster, we also require a final report on network operational status after DIRS is deactivated.

This is a terrific first step. But we need to go further. Because when the unthinkable occurs, we reach for a range of communications not covered by our rules. That is why we also include a rulemaking with our decision today.

My hope is that with this order and rulemaking we are on course to keep more people connected in disaster. Now is not a moment too soon. Hurricane season starts in less than six months and in the intervening time it is a good bet that other storms are headed our way. One thing we know for sure is that Mother Nature's wrath will visit us again and again. So we have to continue to update our policies on network resiliency so that communications are available when we need them most.

I want to share my appreciation for staff who worked on this effort, including Logan Bennett, John Blumenschein, Michael Caiafa, Justin Cain, Shawn Cochran, John Evanoff, David Furth, Bill Kang, Nikki McGinnis, and Erika Olsen from the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau; Deborah Broderson, Doug Klein, Anjali Singh, and Chin Yoo from the Office of General Counsel; Steve Kaufman, Cher Li, Patrick Sun, Emily Talaga, and Aleks Yankelevich from the Office of Economics and Analytics; Stephen Duall, Kerry Murray, Troy Tanner, and Patrick Webre from the Space Bureau; Evan Baranoff, Steven Broeckaert, Mark Columbo, Hillary DeNigro, Barbara Kreisman, Sean Mirzadegan, Evan Morris, Maria Mullarky, Brendan Murray, and Albert Shuldiner from the Media Bureau; Matthew Gibson, Jason Koslofsky, Shannon Lipp, Jeremy Marcus, Ryan McDonald, and Elizabeth Mumaw from the Enforcement Bureau; Cameron Duncan and Kari Hicks from the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau; Adam Copeland, Melissa Kirkel, and Chris Laughlin from the Wireline Competition Bureau; and Joy Ragsdale and Chana Wilkerson from the Office of Communications Business Opportunities. Finally, I want to thank Commissioner Gomez for her thoughtful contributions to the rulemaking regarding FirstNet and public safety.