

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER OLIVIA TRUSTY**

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*, Report and Order, PS Docket Nos. 21-346 and 15-80; ET Docket No. 04-35 (May 20, 2026).

I recently traveled to Louisiana to speak with a group of rural telecommunications providers about the persistent challenges of deploying broadband in hard-to-reach parts of the country. Given the location of the event in downtown New Orleans, our discussion also touched on the importance of network resilience and lessons learned following the massive flooding caused by Hurricane Katrina and the devastating impact it had on communications networks and other critical infrastructure.

That tragedy marked a turning point in emergency preparedness, response, and coordination, sparking policy reforms including the creation of the Disaster Information Reporting System. At its core, DIRS helps to provide situational awareness about the operational status of communications networks during emergencies and natural disasters. But as this proceeding has demonstrated, there is a need to modernize this system so that providers can submit accurate and timely information without taking on additional reporting or administrative requirements that have proven to be unnecessary to disaster response and recovery efforts.

Today's item streamlines the DIRS reporting process by eliminating worksheets, information fields, and other requirements that are outdated and nonessential, while improving the online interface, and incorporating a more user-friendly filing option during emergencies. In addition to making DIRS easier to use, this item will provide Federal, state, and local officials with a more precise and comprehensive understanding of network availability in the aftermath of disasters so they can help restore connectivity when communities need it most.

When providers should be focused on the maintenance and restoration of communications services, they should be met with a simple and functional system that is easy to navigate, and this Report and Order helps to achieve that objective. I thank the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau for their thoughtful work on this item.