NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC. 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FCC TAKES ACTION TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN NATION'S EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM

Order to Ensure Efficient, Rapid Transmission of Emergency Information to the Public

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission ("Commission") today adopted a Second Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ("Order" or "Further Notice") that strengthens the nation's Emergency Alert System (EAS). The Commission's Order promotes the development of fully digital Next Generation technologies and delivery systems that will better serve the American public.

The Order requires EAS participants to accept messages using Common Alerting Protocol (CAP), the groundwork for Next Generation EAS delivery systems, no later than 180 days after FEMA announces its adoption of standards in each case. The use of CAP will help to ensure the efficient and rapid transmission of EAS alerts to the American public in a variety of formats (including text, audio and video) and via different means (broadcast, cable, satellite, and other networks) and to promote the development of Next Generation EAS.

One result of these developments will be enhanced access to EAS alerts and warnings for persons with disabilities and for non-English speakers. The Further Notice seeks comment on how best to deliver EAS alerts as well as broader emergency and public safety information to these groups, and commits to adoption of a final order within six months. In light of the examination of these issues in the Further Notice, the Order leaves open the issues raised in a petition filed by several groups representing non-English speaking persons. The Commission directs the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau to convene a meeting – or series of meetings – as soon as possible on providing emergency information to non-English speakers. The stakeholders should submit into the record a progress report on these discussions within 30 days of the Order's release.

The Order also requires terrestrial EAS participants to transmit state and locally targeted EAS alerts that are originated by governors or their designees. The Further Notice seeks comment on whether Participants should be required to deliver EAS alerts originated by local, county, tribal, or other state governmental entities.

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In addition, the Order expands the EAS system by requiring participation by wireline video providers.

Finally, the Order states the Commission's intention to ensure that the EAS network is prepared to operate as intended. The Further Notice seeks comment on several possible means for achieving that goal, including additional testing, station certification, and post hoc assessments of how well the system worked after an EAS warning has been triggered.

Action by the Commission, May 31, 2007, by Second Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 07-109). Chairman Martin, and Commissioners Copps, Adelstein, Tate and McDowell. Separate Statements issued by Chairman Martin, and Commissioners Copps Adelstein, Tate and McDowell.

EB Docket No. 04-296

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