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For Immediate Release

FCC PROMOTES EMERGENCY ALERT RELIABILITY

***Action Supports More Effective Local Emergency Alert Tests and PSAs,
Addresses False Alerts, and Seeks to Improve Wireless Alerts***

WASHINGTON, July 12, 2018—The Federal Communications Commission today took the latest in a series of actions to bolster the reliability of the nation’s emergency alerting systems and support greater community preparedness.

In a Report and Order adopted today, the Commission set forth procedures for authorized state and local officials to conduct “live code” tests of the Emergency Alert System, which use the same alert codes and processes as would be used in actual emergencies. These tests can increase the proficiency of local alerting officials while educating the public about how to respond to actual alerts. The procedures adopted by the Commission require appropriate coordination, planning, and disclaimers to accompany any such test.

To further enhance public awareness, today’s action will also permit authorized Public Service Announcements (PSAs) about the Emergency Alert System to include the system’s Attention Signal (the attention-grabbing two-tone audio signal that precedes the alert message) and simulated Header Code tones (the three audible tones that precede the Attention Signal) so long as an appropriate disclaimer is included in the PSA.

Today’s action also requires Emergency Alert System equipment to be configured in a manner that can help prevent false alerts and requires an Emergency Alert System participant, such as a broadcaster or cable system, to inform the Commission if it discovers that it has transmitted a false alert. In addition, in an accompanying Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, the Commission seeks comment on other specific measures to help stakeholders prevent and correct false alerts.

The Commission also seeks comment on the performance of Wireless Emergency Alerts, including how such performance should be measured and whether, and if so how, the Commission should address inconsistent delivery of these messages.

Action by the Commission July 12, 2018 by Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 18-94). Chairman Pai, Commissioners Carr, and Rosenworcel approving. Commissioner O’Rielly approving in part and dissenting in part. Chairman Pai, Commissioners O’Rielly, Carr, and Rosenworcel issuing separate statements.

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