

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: Review of the Emergency Alert System

This Order paves the way for bringing our warning system into the digital era. There is every reason to make this a priority, from the threat of more terrorism to the continuing ravages of nature that we have endured this summer. So I am pleased that we are moving to expand EAS into the new digital technologies that so many Americans are using.

Surely it is also time to explore a more comprehensive EAS system. People today use communications devices to receive information in so many ways -- wireline, wireless, radio and television broadcasting, satellite, cable, IP technologies, and others. To make our warning systems and information dissemination as effective as possible, we need to figure out how to integrate these diverse technologies.

While the Further Notice is rather brief, I hope everyone will realize the many questions that need to be addressed as we bring the EAS into the Twenty-first century. For example, we need to make sure that *all* Americans receive emergency information, including those with disabilities and those whose primary fluency is in a language other than English. In the recent hurricanes, tens of thousands of residents whose primary language is not English lacked access to the information and warnings that others were receiving. We need to solve this problem.

Secondly, we need to realize that although EAS is a national system, it also affords state and local authorities the capability to provide emergency information on everything from weather emergencies to Amber alerts that save abducted children. So we need to decide who exactly, and at what level, can activate this system. And does it make sense that employment of the system remains voluntary in most instances?

So there is a lot to do to complete this proceeding. And we do not have the luxury of time in these efforts—terrorists and hurricanes don't wait on us. These are critical questions that are integral to our public safety and homeland security efforts. I look forward to working on this with my colleagues and with our new Bureau which I hope will be up and running soon.