



January 8, 2018

Chairman Ajit Pai
Commissioner Brendan Carr
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Mr. Chairman and Commissioners,

On behalf of the residents of Harris County, Texas, I am writing to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to adopt the enhanced geo-targeting capabilities for the Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) system. Harris County is the third most populous county in the nation – home to more than 4 million people, spread across more than 1,770 square miles – and has only recently used the WEA system for the first time during Hurricane Harvey.

The lack of precision when using WEA limits public safety officials in Harris County from using the life-saving tool to its full potential. As Harris County continues to grow, develop and diversify, the need for an enhanced emergency alerting system is crucial and expected by the residents of our community. I strongly urge the FCC to make the 1/10th of a mile geo-targeting capability for WEA messages a reality by May 2019, in concordance with the implementation of other planned WEA enhancements.

WEA enabled devices already have the technology they need to add device-based discrimination: the capability to receive cell broadcast messages, the ability to know the device's location, the functionality to display maps, and the processing power to incorporate all three of these and more. A software update will allow this life-saving enhancement to exist. To enable this capability by May of 2019, wireless carriers can utilize the software update process

that they regularly employ to enhance the technology, features and functionality that reside in our devices.

In Harris County and across the nation the need for a precise system of communicating life saving information is critical. The longer it takes to improve geo-targeted alerts, the more lives are potentially put at risk. The time to act is now. On behalf of Harris County and our public safety partners across the country, I must insist that WEA geo-targeting capabilities be implemented no later than May 2019. It is irresponsible not to do so.

Hurricane Harvey proved that a more advanced regional flood warning system is necessary, and WEA would be a crucial part. The ability to target a specific area in one of our 22 watersheds is not only necessary for the complex system of public alerting, but is expected by residents given that all watersheds experienced different levels of flood damage. Even with the May 2019 implementation timeline, Harris County will still endure at least one hurricane season before these life-saving capabilities are available for WEA messages. The time to act on WEA enhancements is now.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ed Emmett", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ed Emmett
County Judge