May 29, 2018

Via FCC Electronic Comment Filing System

Ms. Marlene Dortch

Secretary

Federal Communications Commission

445 12th Street, SW

Washington, DC 20554

Re: Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) – Proceeding 15-91 and 15-94

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) wishes to refresh the record on the issue of facilitating multimedia content in Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) messages. We offer the following comments.

**Need for Inclusion of an Interactive Map**

The FCC has been urged by multiple agencies to adopt rules for inclusion of an interactive map showing the recipient’s location along with the alert originator’s defined threat area. Since 2007, NOAA’s NWS has made polygon-based alerts available to the public in graphical format. Based on social science research conducted over the last 20 years, NOAA’s NWS reasserts that an interactive map is necessary to help people to better personalize the threat, so that those in harm’s way take decisive life-saving action.

Once alert polygon vertices are broadcast to the device for “geo-fencing” of alerts, as required by the *Second Report And Order And Second Order On Reconsideration* (January 30, 2018), those same vertices could be used to display the threat area on maps which are already built into the device (e.g. Google Maps, Apple Maps, etc.) or other map included as part of the WEA application. Since the recipient’s location is also used in “geo-fencing”, it could be plotted on the map showing the recipient’s location relative to the threat area.

NOAA’s NWS recommends that social scientists be included as part of the effort to incorporate interactive maps in WEA. Any maps associated with WEA should be clear and concise to ensure understanding by the public.

NOAA’s NWS notes that other agencies have publicly filed with the FCC in support of an interactive map. For example:

In filing #12081875330397, Nassau County Office of Emergency Management said, “an interactive map showing the recipient’s location relative to the threat area would be much more beneficial to help guide the recipient away from danger”.

In filing # 1209123142407 Calhoun County Emergency Management Agency said, “those who receive WEA alerts should be able to access and/or see a map on the device which clearly identifies the location of the device relative to the alert’s geographical polygon area. This is a crucial feature for allowing the public to discern their relative proximity to the warned hazard area, which is a key element in warning response decision making behavior—this information is necessary, as has been noted in social science.”

**Other Multimedia Content**

WEA should take advantage and leverage the device’s built-in capabilities to render additional life-saving information in graphical, audio, or disability friendly formats. For example, short videos or other accessible content demonstrating protective action-taking (e.g. seek shelter, move to higher ground, etc.) could be built into the WEA application and rendered upon request by the recipient.

**Conclusion**

WEA needs to keep pace with advancements in wireless technology, mobile devices, and the evolving capabilities of alerting authorities. Incorporation of multimedia content in WEA is a next logical step toward saving lives with WEA.

Sincerely,

/s/ Michael E. Gerber

Physical Scientist, Office of Dissemination

NOAA/National Weather Service