

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 16, 2019

474

The Honorable Ajit V. Pai  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai,

As you work to implement changes to the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system in the aftermath of recent wildfires, we ask that you promptly consider any additional measures necessary to ensure that any changes to the system do not impair its ability to provide rapid earthquake early warning alerts.

Recent seismic activity along the West Coast demonstrates the need to continue developing rapid early alerts for earthquakes. Last Friday, a 4.6 magnitude earthquake struck the Seattle region in Washington. A magnitude 6.4 earthquake hit Southern California on July 4, followed by a 7.1 magnitude earthquake a day later – the strongest earthquake to hit the state in 20 years. While the town of Ridgecrest was too close to receive an alert through the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) ShakeAlert earthquake early warning system before strong shaking began, other areas could have received WEA alerts in time: 15 seconds for California City, 21 seconds for Barstow and 48 seconds for Los Angeles. But these alert times would be reduced by WEA delivery latency. The success of earthquake early warning relies on extremely rapid, low-latency alert times. As a result, the recent changes to the WEA system to better geo-fence wildfire and other emergency alerts could unintentionally delay notifications and severely weaken the effectiveness of the ShakeAlert system.

Therefore, we ask that you work with the relevant stakeholders, including USGS, to ensure that the recent WEA changes do not inadvertently impair the ShakeAlert system's ability to provide specialized and timely earthquake warnings. We understand that on June 21, USGS asked the Federal Communications Commission to consider various changes to the WEA rules to make wireless earthquake alerts more effective. We ask that your agency act on this request from USGS for clarification, waiver and rule changes as soon as possible. We also ask that you promptly address any other issues posed by the new WEA rules that stakeholders believe will affect the distribution of wireless earthquake alerts.

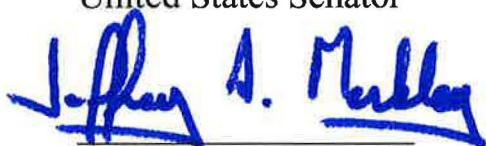
We appreciate the work the Commission has done to date on improving the WEA alerting system, and we look forward to working with you to continue improving emergency response capabilities in our nation.

Given the recent earthquakes in Washington and Southern California, the effectiveness of earthquake early alerts to our constituents is more critical than ever. Please provide within 30 days of receipt of this letter an update on the Commission's plan to address USGS's request. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,



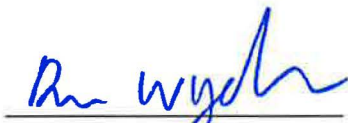
Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



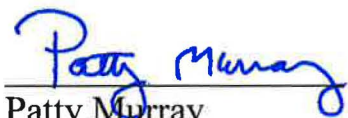
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Patty Murray  
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



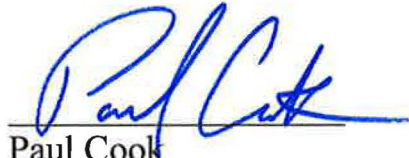
Kevin McCarthy  
House Republican Leader



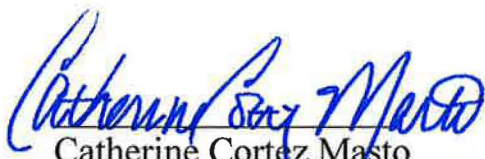
Ken Calvert  
Member of Congress



Adam Schiff  
Member of Congress



Paul Cook  
Member of Congress



Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



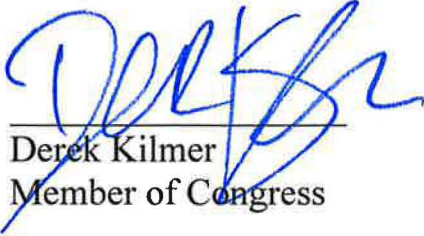
Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress



Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



Jaime Herrera Beutler  
Member of Congress



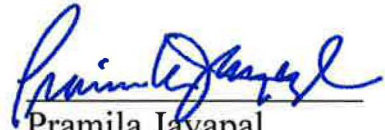
Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress



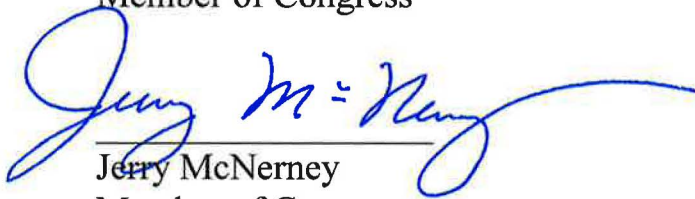
Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress



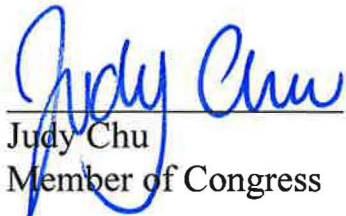
Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress



Judy Chu  
Member of Congress





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

November 4, 2019

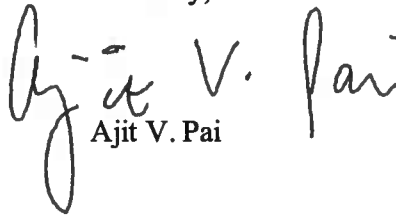
The Honorable Jerry McNerney  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2265 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman McNerney:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system's readiness to support the United States Geological Survey's (USGS) earthquake early warning system, ShakeAlert. I share your commitment to ensuring that the WEA system is effective, so that when disasters such as the recent earthquakes along the West Coast strike, those in harm's way can get reliable information to stay safe and protect their loved ones. I am pleased to report that on September 23, 2019, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau granted waiver relief to allow earthquake early warnings and related Public Safety Messages issued by USGS to reach the public as quickly as possible. I have attached a copy of the waiver order to this letter.

As Chairman, I have taken important strides to improve emergency alerting in response to alert originators' concerns, and I will continue to prioritize public safety. I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

  
Ajit V. Pai



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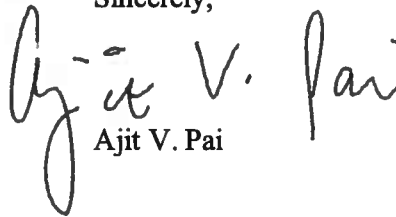
The Honorable Adam B. Schiff  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2269 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Schiff:

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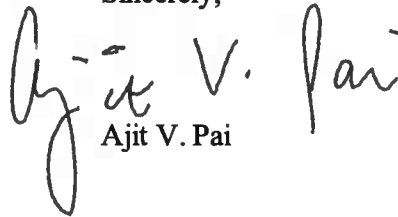
The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senate  
516 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cortez Masto:

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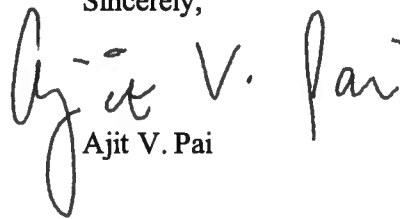
The Honorable Derek Kilmer  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1520 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Kilmer:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system's readiness to support the United States Geological Survey's (USGS) earthquake early warning system, ShakeAlert. I share your commitment to ensuring that the WEA system is effective, so that when disasters such as the recent earthquakes along the West Coast strike, those in harm's way can get reliable information to stay safe and protect their loved ones. I am pleased to report that on September 23, 2019, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau granted waiver relief to allow earthquake early warnings and related Public Safety Messages issued by USGS to reach the public as quickly as possible. I have attached a copy of the waiver order to this letter.

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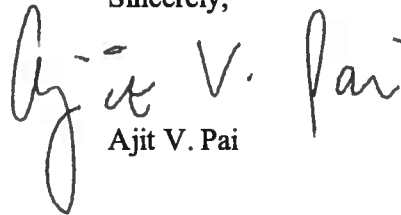
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senate  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

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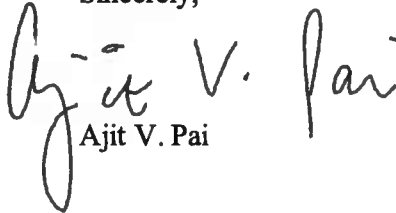
The Honorable Jacky Rosen  
United States Senate  
G12 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Rosen:

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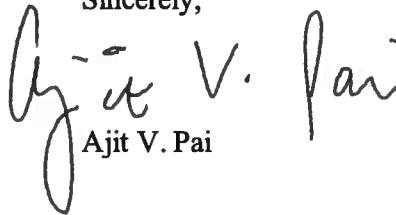
The Honorable Jaime Herrera Beutler  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1107 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Herrera Beutler:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system's readiness to support the United States Geological Survey's (USGS) earthquake early warning system, ShakeAlert. I share your commitment to ensuring that the WEA system is effective, so that when disasters such as the recent earthquakes along the West Coast strike, those in harm's way can get reliable information to stay safe and protect their loved ones. I am pleased to report that on September 23, 2019, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau granted waiver relief to allow earthquake early warnings and related Public Safety Messages issued by USGS to reach the public as quickly as possible. I have attached a copy of the waiver order to this letter.

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The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
United States Senate  
313 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Merkley:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system's readiness to support the United States Geological Survey's (USGS) earthquake early warning system, ShakeAlert. I share your commitment to ensuring that the WEA system is effective, so that when disasters such as the recent earthquakes along the West Coast strike, those in harm's way can get reliable information to stay safe and protect their loved ones. I am pleased to report that on September 23, 2019, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau granted waiver relief to allow earthquake early warnings and related Public Safety Messages issued by USGS to reach the public as quickly as possible. I have attached a copy of the waiver order to this letter.

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Ajit V. Pai



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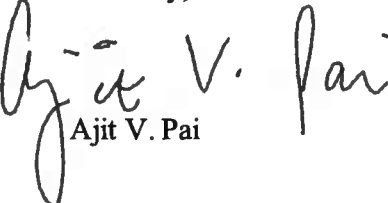
The Honorable Judy Chu  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2423 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Chu:

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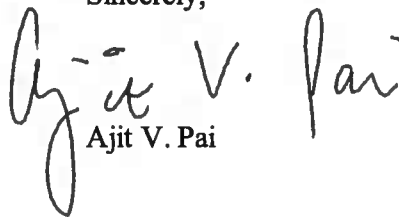
The Honorable Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senate  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Harris:

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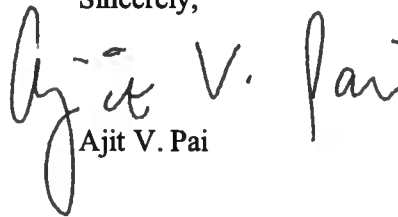
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2468 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman McCarthy:

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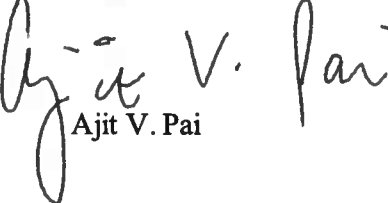
The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
United States Senate  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

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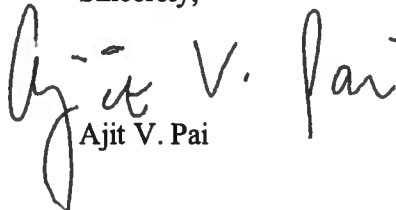
The Honorable Patty Murray  
United States Senate  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

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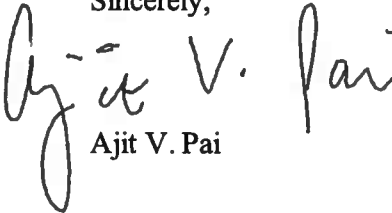
The Honorable Paul Cook  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1222 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cook:

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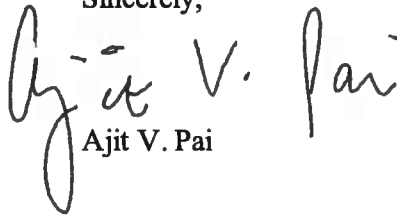
The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2134 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

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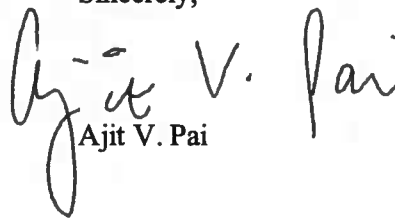
The Honorable Pramila Jayapal  
U.S. House of Representatives  
319 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Jayapal:

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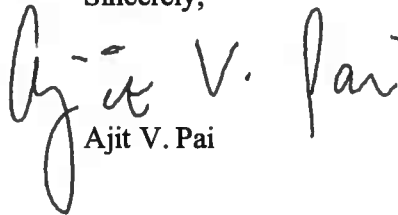
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

November 4, 2019

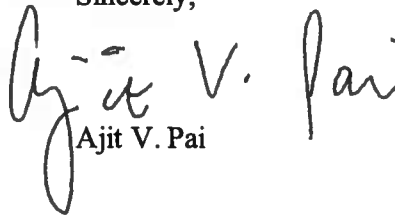
The Honorable Suzan DelBene  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2442 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman DelBene:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system's readiness to support the United States Geological Survey's (USGS) earthquake early warning system, ShakeAlert. I share your commitment to ensuring that the WEA system is effective, so that when disasters such as the recent earthquakes along the West Coast strike, those in harm's way can get reliable information to stay safe and protect their loved ones. I am pleased to report that on September 23, 2019, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau granted waiver relief to allow earthquake early warnings and related Public Safety Messages issued by USGS to reach the public as quickly as possible. I have attached a copy of the waiver order to this letter.

As Chairman, I have taken important strides to improve emergency alerting in response to alert originators' concerns, and I will continue to prioritize public safety. I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

  
Ajit V. Pai



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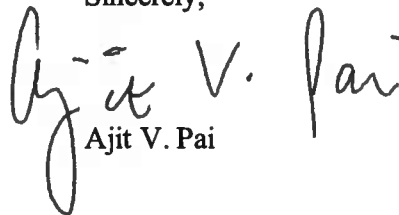
The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici  
U.S. House of Representatives  
439 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Bonamici:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system's readiness to support the United States Geological Survey's (USGS) earthquake early warning system, ShakeAlert. I share your commitment to ensuring that the WEA system is effective, so that when disasters such as the recent earthquakes along the West Coast strike, those in harm's way can get reliable information to stay safe and protect their loved ones. I am pleased to report that on September 23, 2019, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau granted waiver relief to allow earthquake early warnings and related Public Safety Messages issued by USGS to reach the public as quickly as possible. I have attached a copy of the waiver order to this letter.

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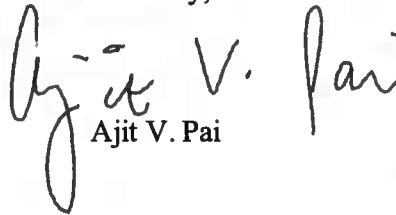
The Honorable Ken Calvert  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2205 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Calvert:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system's readiness to support the United States Geological Survey's (USGS) earthquake early warning system, ShakeAlert. I share your commitment to ensuring that the WEA system is effective, so that when disasters such as the recent earthquakes along the West Coast strike, those in harm's way can get reliable information to stay safe and protect their loved ones. I am pleased to report that on September 23, 2019, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau granted waiver relief to allow earthquake early warnings and related Public Safety Messages issued by USGS to reach the public as quickly as possible. I have attached a copy of the waiver order to this letter.

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