

The National Weather Service (NWS) welcomes the opportunity to provide input to EB Docket No. 04-296 concerning Part 11 Emergency Alert System (EAS) Rules.

Request for a change in Part 11 rules, Subpart B, Section 11.31(f), Offshore (Marine Areas)

This is a reiteration of change requests submitted by the NWS in August 2011 and November 2013 for consideration by the FCC.

The National Weather Service opened a new Weather Forecast Office (WFO) in Key West, Florida in 1999. This resulted in configuration changes to the offshore (marine) areas served by WFOs at Tampa Bay and Miami, Florida. However, the NWS did not submit a change request to the FCC in time for the Part 11 rules which became effective in 2003.

As a result, one of the operational NWS end points for our offshore (marine) areas differs from the offshore (marine) areas referenced in Part 11. Specifically, the NWS references the Ocean Reef, FL end point, whereas the current American National Standards Institute (ANSI) location code for ANSI Number 75 still refers to Bonita Beach, FL. This may cause confusion for broadcasters, the emergency management community, and particularly the maritime commerce community; the discrepancy would be most problematic when tropical cyclone (that is, tropical storm and hurricane) watches and warnings are issued for southern Florida.

An initial check with several EAS encoder/decoder manufacturers indicates the cost and time to make this change will be nominal. Therefore, in the interest of enhancing public safety and improving communications associated with tropical cyclone watches and warnings for southern Florida, and most particularly for the nation's marine community, the Department of Defense and the US Coast Guard,

- (1) The NWS requests ANSI offshore (marine area) number 75 be changed to state:
ANSI # 75: Western North Atlantic Ocean, and along U.S. East Coast, south of Currituck Beach Light, NC, following the coastline to Ocean Reef, FL, including the Caribbean
- (2) The NWS requests ANSI offshore (marine area) number 77 be changed to state:
ANSI # 77: Gulf of Mexico, and along the U.S. Gulf Coast from the Mexican border to Ocean Reef, FL

The NWS respectfully requests implementation of the above changes by February 1, 2015, to allow time to prepare for the 2015 Atlantic hurricane season beginning June 1, 2015 in the Atlantic, Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico.

Mr. Timothy Schott in the NWS Headquarters Office of Climate, Water and Weather Services is the lead staff member for the requested changes to the Part 11 EAS Rules. He may be reached via e mail at timothy.schott@noaa.gov or by telephone at (301) 713-0090 x146.