

FCC Bureau Focusing on Further Rules for Wireless Emergency Alerts

The FCC Public Safety Bureau has been calling in industry companies and groups and is likely preparing an additional order on wireless emergency alerts (WEAs), industry officials said. Meanwhile, CTIA and the Competitive Carriers Association asked the FCC to extend a Nov. 1 deadline for carriers to meet new WEA requirements (see [1708170017](#)). Based on questions raised in industry meetings, likely areas for further rules include the accuracy of geolocation for alerts and potential requirements for multilingual WEA messages and the caching of alerts. All of those areas were explored in last year's [Further NPRM](#).

"They've called a lot of people and have been jousting with CTIA," said a lawyer active in the proceeding. "I assumed staff was getting a recommendation ready to send upstairs." Something appears to be "percolating," said a lawyer with wireless clients. Chairman Ajit Pai "does seem intent on keeping an active agenda." The FCC, CCA and CTIA declined to comment.

The FCC revised its rules in September (see [1609290060](#)), increasing the maximum length of WEA messages from 90 to 360 characters for 4G LTE and future networks and requiring participating wireless providers to support inclusion of embedded phone numbers and URLs in all WEA alerts.

Commissioner Mike O'Rielly objected at the time, questioning whether the changes were doable. "Today's order requires certain components to be completed in 30 months and others in a year," he said. "While people will undoubtedly say these timelines are sufficient, these solutions will need to go through the standards process, device and network development, testing, and be deployed into the marketplace."

In the latest filing on WEA issues in docket 15-91, the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions [reported](#) on a call with Public Safety Bureau staff. ATIS said FCC staff raised questions about geolocation of messages and a proposed accuracy standard, which would require 100 percent of targeted devices within the specified alert area to receive an alert with no more than 0.10-mile overshoot. "ATIS does not believe that this standard is achievable based on existing cell site technology," the filing said. "Another technical issue that may prevent compliance with this standard is the fact that there is no way to absolutely know a device's location in all circumstances."

FCC staff also asked about industry ability to address multilingual WEA messages, ATIS said. There may be “technical challenges depending on the number of languages that would need to be supported,” the group said. On caching of messages, ATIS said, “the Commission asked for input on a proposed approach that would require devices to cache WEA messages so that customers who have opted out of receiving these messages would be able to view past messages in some manner. ATIS noted that it would need to study this issue further.” In an earlier [filing](#), T-Mobile said its representatives fielded FCC questions on similar issues, including “the technical feasibility and/or requirements associated with different approaches to geo-targeting, multimedia alerting and multilingual-supported alerting, beyond English and Spanish.”

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2115 Ward Court NW, Washington, DC 20037
p 800.771.9202 | www.communicationsdaily.com | sales@warren-news.com

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