

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Modernization of the Nation’s Alerting Systems	)	PS Docket No. 25-224
	)	
Protecting the Nation’s Communications Systems from Cybersecurity Threats	)	PS Docket No. 22-329
	)	
Wireless Emergency Alerts	)	PS Docket No. 15-91
	)	
Amendment of Part 11 of the Commission’s Rules Regarding the Emergency Alert System	)	PS Docket No. 15-94
	)	

COMMENTS OF NEW YORK PUBLIC RADIO

New York Public Radio (“NYPR”) hereby submits these Comments in response to the Commission’s Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the above-captioned proceedings.¹ As discussed below, NYPR appreciates the Commission’s commitment to modernizing the Emergency Alert System (“EAS”). In particular, NYPR supports the FCC’s proposal to allow the voluntary use of a software-based approach for EAS alert processing and urges the Commission to adopt that proposal expeditiously.

Introduction

As New York City’s heritage public broadcaster, NYPR is one of the country’s preeminent producers and providers of non-commercial broadcast programming and related audio content. NYPR is the licensee of flagship station WNYC-FM and sister AM station WNYC, New York, NY.² WNYC and WNYC-FM are news and information-oriented public

¹ *Modernization of the Nation’s Alerting Systems*, PS Docket Nos. 25-224, 22-329, 15-91, and 15-94, FCC 26-38 (June 29, 2026) (the “FNPRM”).

² NYPR also owns and operates New York City’s only all-classical music station, WQXR-FM, Newark, NJ, as well as New Jersey Public Radio and its four affiliated FM stations, which provide award-winning journalism and public

radio stations dedicated to award-winning enterprise journalism, community engagement around critical issues, and courageous conversations convened via local and national programs.

WNYC-FM is an EAS State Relay and Local Primary 1 (“LP-1”) station for the New York City area in the New York State EAS plan. As the licensee of an LP-1 station based in the largest market in the country, NYPR understands the importance of EAS. Emergency messaging is ingrained in WNYC’s DNA. Rooted in its original ownership by the Municipal Broadcasting System of the City of New York, WNYC has been at the forefront of delivering timely and essential emergency information to New Yorkers for decades. In the 1950s, WNYC was a member of the New York City Civil Defense Organization and served as a flagship radio outlet for the Civil Defense network connecting twenty-four radio stations and seven television stations in the city. WNYC organized and operated New York City’s first post-war daytime air raid drill on November 28, 1952. The station distributed the broadcast to the city’s radio and television stations, publicizing the drill on the ground with a fleet of fifty-seven sound trucks which “toured throughout the city” playing “a standardized recording that emphasized that only an air raid test was in progress.”³

Under today’s EAS infrastructure, WNYC has served as a leader in providing New Yorkers with life-saving information during emergencies. For example, during the horrific events of September 11, 2001, WNYC’s staff worked tirelessly to deliver critical emergency information to listeners—even while being evacuated from the station’s studio facilities just blocks away from the World Trade Center. Without missing a minute of live news coverage,

affairs coverage of the Garden State. Additionally, NYPR is home to WNYC Studios, the premier producer of critically acclaimed broadcast audio and on-demand podcast content for national audiences. NYPR reaches a passionate community of almost 26 million people monthly on-air, online, and in person.

³ “*Blueprint for Survival*,” *Spring 3100: A Magazine for Policemen*, Police Department, City of New York, Vol. 23, No. 1, pg. 27 (1952), https://archive.org/stream/spring311952newyrich/spring311952newyrich_djvu.txt.

WNYC on-air production and engineering teams walked approximately sixty blocks to an alternate production facility. This facility provided a headquarters from which WNYC could continue broadcasting and disseminating essential information. Similarly, WNYC’s staff defied the odds and continued transmitting life-saving information during New York City’s largest power failure, the regional Northeast blackout of August 14-16, 2003—despite being evacuated to another facility. During 2012’s Hurricane Sandy, WNYC continued broadcasting through generator power because NYPR’s facilities were without electrical power for six days. And during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, NYPR adapted its operations and workflows to facilitate remote work, including through home studios for on-air and production talent.⁴

With this first-hand understanding of the critical need for a fast, reliable, and resilient EAS system to serve as a lifeline to New York and communities throughout the country, NYPR has from the beginning supported the National Association of Broadcasters’ (“NAB”) proposal to allow broadcasters voluntarily to use software-based EAS encoder/decoder technology in lieu of a physical hardware device to process EAS messages.⁵ NYPR is pleased that the Commission recognizes the need “to align the EAS rules with modern technologies and potentially reduce unnecessary burdens on EAS Participants.”⁶ Furthermore, NYPR agrees with the Commission’s determination to “explore the technical and operational benefits that may arise from the use of EAS software, ‘includ[ing] streamlined operations, improved remote maintenance and control, and increased security of EAS equipment.’”⁷ Additionally, NYPR appreciates the many

⁴ See Paul McLane, *How WNYC Confronted the Pandemic*, Radio World, June 15, 2020, <https://www.radioworld.com/news-and-business/how-wnyc-confronted-the-pandemic> (last visited Aug. 31, 2026).

⁵ See Reply Comments of New York Public Radio, PS Docket Nos. 15-94, 15-91, and 22-239 (filed Jan. 23, 2023); Comments in Support of Petition for Rulemaking by the Joint Commenters New York Public Radio, University Radio Foundation, Inc., and J. Paxton Durham, PS Docket Nos. 15-94 and 22-239 (filed May 2, 2025); *see also* NAB’s Petition for Rulemaking, PS Docket Nos. 15-94 and 22-329 (Mar. 31, 2025).

⁶ FNPRM ¶ 89.

⁷ *Id.* ¶ 90 (citation omitted).

thoughtful questions and issues identified in the FNPRM, such as the possible use of standardized symbols in EAS alerts to identify emergency threat type.⁸ As the Commission looks to modernize EAS, NYPR encourages the FCC to prioritize facilitating a voluntary, software-based approach that strengthens broadcasters' ability to deliver emergency information.

The FCC Should Allow Stations to Flexibly Implement Software EAS

NYPR agrees with many of the FNPRM's proposed rules regarding software EAS. For instance, NYPR supports the Commission's proposal to require certification and testing for EAS software.⁹ During emergencies, the ability of listeners and viewers to trust their local broadcast stations is all-important. Especially during critical moments when the public most needs emergency information, there should be zero risk of compromise by untrusted, unverified EAS software.

However, NYPR encourages the Commission to regulate with a light touch and allow stations sufficient flexibility in implementing software EAS technology. For example, NYPR fully supports the FNPRM's proposed requirement that EAS software "be located at the EAS Participant's local facility used to provide service."¹⁰ Moreover, NYPR agrees with the Commission's proposal to "prohibit EAS from being generated within cloud-based systems or cloud-based third-party EAS services."¹¹ At the same time, as the FNPRM recognizes, software EAS can be installed in multiple locations of the air chain, such as studios, transmitter sites, and auxiliary locations.¹² This is key to system resiliency. For example, if studios must be evacuated in an emergency, messaging generated from alternate locations will facilitate an

⁸ *Id.* ¶¶ 78-82.

⁹ *Id.* ¶¶ 104-110.

¹⁰ *Id.* ¶ 98.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.* ¶ 96.

uninterrupted information flow. As NYPR's experience shows, this flexibility is vital during emergencies when EAS messaging to the public is most important, but when station staff may not be able to access the studio. Therefore, it is important that the Commission adopt its proposal to allow EAS software installation "across multiple components within [an EAS Participant's signal processing] system, thus enabling integration of different EAS functions across multiple system components."¹³

In terms of operational readiness, NYPR believes that it is premature to reduce the time "to repair or replace defective EAS software before notifying the Commission from 60 days to 72 hours."¹⁴ While software-based EAS is capable of much more rapid repair, as the FNPRM notes,¹⁵ the Commission should refrain from altering its rule until stations have an opportunity to determine how best to deploy EAS software. For example, if EAS software is embedded in an audio processor and that processor fails, more than 72 hours would likely be needed to repair the processor. Thus, NYPR encourages the Commission to keep its 60-day repair rule until stations' methods of EAS software implementation are fully understood.

In addition to the Commission's software-based EAS proposals, NYPR appreciates the FCC's consideration of numerous related ways to enhance alert effectiveness. For instance, NYPR agrees that pairing EAS messages with standard symbols to identify threats could have value, even for radio stations.¹⁶ Because a significant portion of WNYC's audience consists of commuters listening on HD Radio-capable car receivers, visual alert symbols could be safer and easier for drivers to understand than text. NYPR supports rules that would allow EAS participants to employ improvements such as these.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.* ¶ 114; *see* 47 CFR § 11.35(b).

¹⁵ *Id.* ¶ 114.

¹⁶ *Id.* ¶ 78.

Conclusion

NYPR appreciates the Commission's proposal to facilitate software-based technology for EAS alert processing. With the ability to employ a software-based approach, broadcast stations can more effectively and nimbly inform the public during local emergencies. Accordingly, NYPR urges the FCC to issue a Report and Order allowing voluntary deployment of software-based EAS. This would modernize EAS messaging for the benefit of radio listeners in New York City, and ultimately, across the country.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Steve Shultis, Chief Technology Officer
NEW YORK PUBLIC RADIO
160 Varick Street, New York NY 10013
Telephone: (646) 829-4089
Email: sshultis@nypublicradio.org

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