

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER KATHLEEN Q. ABERNATHY**

Re: Review of Emergency Alert System (EB Docket No. 04-296)

In the world we live in today, telecommunications is the vital link that keeps us in touch with each other and with what is going on around us. Unfortunately, the world we live in today has come to be a very dangerous place. Therefore, it is critically important for telecommunications to serve as a reliable instant messenger of news and information that we and our families need to protect ourselves in sudden emergencies.

The Order and Further Notice we adopt today help assure that kind of reliability. By expanding the Commission's Emergency Alert System requirements to the new generation of digital communications services that American families increasingly rely on -- digital broadcast radio and TV, digital cable, and direct-to-home satellite TV and radio services -- the Order advances the goal of getting lifesaving information out to those who need it. And the Further Notice looks to added ways of guaranteeing that *no* American lacks access to emergency information, that *all* technologies are appropriately tasked to help safeguard our people, and that *any* state governor wishing to do so can activate EAS warnings for disasters impacting people in one or more states.

These are excellent outcomes, and I thank the Chairman and the staff who worked so diligently to develop this item and present it to us today. I also express thanks to those in the telecommunications industry who came forward proactively with proposals on how other technologies can contribute to a seamless digital emergency alert system. These issues are discussed in the Further Notice and I look forward to receiving public comment on them.

Given the complexity of telecom regulation, many of the items the Commission votes on have to be broken down and translated to understand the good things expected to come from them. This item isn't one of them: its benefits will be real and tangible, helping to protect our safety and well-being when we are most in peril. For this reason, I fully support it and vote to approve it.