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For Immediate Release

FCC TO VOTE ON NEW EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM CODE FOR MISSING AND ENDANGERED PERSONS

New Event Code Would Help Issue Alerts to the Public About Missing and Endangered People, Build on Efforts to Collect Data on Missing Indigenous Persons Cases

WASHINGTON, July 16, 2024—FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel today announced the Commission will vote during its August Open Meeting to adopt a new event code that would deliver critical messages to the public over television and radio about missing and endangered persons. Adding a new “MEP” event code to the nation’s Emergency Alert System would help law enforcement agencies to galvanize public attention to missing and endangered people of all ages who do not qualify for AMBER Alerts, including those who meet the criteria for Ashanti Alerts.

“Law enforcement agencies successfully use AMBER Alerts on TV and radio to help mobilize public attention and recover abducted children. Yet we do not have a similar code in the Emergency Alert System dedicated to sounding the alarm over other missing and endangered persons, particularly the thousands of missing native and indigenous women who have disappeared from their homes never to be seen again,” **said Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel**. “Today we move forward with establishing a ‘Missing and Endangered Persons’ alert code to close this gap. This will help ensure no person who is missing, at risk of being overlooked and in danger is left behind. With this new code we can save lives.”

Similar to how law enforcement agencies successfully use AMBER Alerts on TV and radio to help mobilize public attention and recover abducted children, this new Missing and Endangered Persons event code would mobilize the public’s help in recovering missing and endangered persons more broadly. This initiative would be particularly beneficial to Tribal communities, where American Indian and Alaska Native people are at a disproportionate risk of violence, murder, or vanishing. The initiative also would promote the development of compatible and integrated Ashanti Alert plans throughout the U.S., consistent with the Ashanti Alert Act.

Alert originators, such as state, tribal, and local law enforcement, use the Emergency Alert System by selecting from a group of event codes based on the nature of the situation. For example, “CAE” signifies a Child Abduction Emergency, otherwise known as an AMBER Alert. These proposed rules would create a new “MEP” alert code for missing and endangered persons who do not meet the criteria for an AMBER Alert. This would enable a more rapid and coordinated response to incidents, and build on efforts by Tribal Nations, the Department of Interior, and the Department of Justice, to collect comprehensive data on missing and endangered Indigenous person cases in accordance with Savanna’s Act.

The Chairwoman will circulate her proposal to her fellow Commissioners for their review. As is the general practice, a public draft of the proposal – officially a Report and Order– will be made public on Wednesday on FCC.gov. At the Commission’s August 7 Open Meeting, the Commissioners will consider and vote on the proposal.

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).