

The Honorable Gordon H. Smith  
President and CEO



February 26, 2020

The Honorable Mike Doyle  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Communications and  
Technology  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bob Latta  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Communications  
and Technology  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2322-A Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2322-A Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Doyle and Pallone, Ranking Members Latta and Walden and  
Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) and the thousands of  
free, local television and radio broadcasters that we represent, thank you for  
holding this important hearing on "Strengthening Communications Networks to  
Help Americans in Crisis."

As the most trusted source of news and emergency updates, Americans turn to  
local television and radio stations first to get the information they need to stay safe  
during times of crisis. Local stations are part of the communities they serve, and  
broadcasters do not hesitate to put themselves in harm's way to bring critical  
information to their neighbors.

1771 N Street NW  
Washington DC 20036 2800  
Phone 202 429 5449  
Fax 202 517 1617  
nab.org

Whether preparing listeners and viewers for the coming storm, directing them to needed supplies and shelter during disasters, or helping rebuild in the aftermath, local stations are part of the communities they serve. Consistent with the legislation before your Subcommittee, broadcasting is sometimes the only available communications medium in an emergency when wireless and other networks fail.

Broadcasting is unique for the following reasons:

- Broadcasting covers virtually everyone – broadcast signals reach more of the U.S. population than any other communication medium and is free to anyone with a radio or TV with an antenna.
- Broadcasting is localized – local TV and radio stations can deliver market specific information as well as national alerts.
- Broadcasting has no bottlenecks – an emergency alert can reach millions of people simultaneously without concern over network congestion.
- Broadcasting is redundant – there are numerous independently operated stations in each market that deliver alerts.
- Broadcasting is resilient – stations often operate with back-up equipment, generators and fuel supplies to keep stations on the air.
- Broadcaster information is actionable – radio and television stations help people understand what is happening and what steps they should take to stay safe.
- Broadcasters are trusted – they are an integral part of their local communities and speak not just as an authority but as a neighbor.

Local radio and television broadcasters are proud to play the vital role of first informers to keep their communities safe and are committed to providing relevant and up-to-date information when lives are at risk. Accordingly, NAB supports the Reliable Emergency Alert Distribution Improvement (READI) Act (H.R. 4856), which would improve the timeliness, accuracy and availability of emergency alerts when disaster strikes.

Finally, broadcasters are innovating to improve upon this important emergency role through technologies such as Next Gen TV. Beyond stunning pictures, immersive and customizable audio and improved reception to enhance and expand the broadcast viewing experience, Next Gen TV has many features that will improve emergency alerting and public safety, including the ability to wake up sleeping devices, deliver more precise geo-targeted alerts and send rich multimedia files such as weather radar images, evacuation maps and even video files with detailed explanations about the emergency and what to do.

Next Gen TV also supports enhanced mobile reception, so viewers can access unlimited live local and national news, the most popular sports and entertainment programs and children's shows on mobile devices over-the air without having to rely on cellular data services. That means viewers won't run through their data cap, and there's no monthly fee. As broadcasters move to unleash the next generation of free broadcast television service, we welcome the opportunity to continue to work with this Committee to ensure our audience and your constituents have the information that they need to stay safe during times of emergency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Smith", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gordon H. Smith