

**Hearing on “Future of Emergency Alerting”
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
May 17, 2017
Statement of Sam Matheny, Chief Technology Officer
National Association of Broadcasters**

Good morning, Chairman Blackburn, Ranking Member Doyle and members of the Subcommittee. My name is Sam Matheny and I am the chief technology officer at the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB). Thank you for inviting me to testify today on the unique and important role that local broadcasters play as first informers during times of emergency, and how the innovations of Next Gen TV will enhance that ability. I bring an on-the-ground perspective to this issue from my nearly 20 years of experience with Capitol Broadcasting Company, parent to WRAL-TV in Raleigh, NC.

Like WRAL, all NAB members – the thousands of free, local radio and television broadcasters in your hometowns – take seriously their role as the most trusted source of news and emergency updates. Whether it’s preparing listeners and viewers for the coming storm, directing them to needed supplies and shelter during the disaster, or helping towns and cities rebuild in the aftermath, local stations are part of the communities they serve. And local radio and TV stations are sometimes the only available communication mediums in an emergency when cell phones and wireless networks fail. In fact, a new poll was released by today by Morning Consult, reaffirming that broadcasters are the number one medium that the American People turn to in times of emergency, by a factor of nearly four to one.

This unique combination of trust and reliability is why, in addition to our ongoing, comprehensive news coverage of emergencies, broadcasters form the backbone of the

Emergency Alert System (EAS). EAS connects over-the-air broadcast radio, television and cable systems to communicate critical safety information to the public during sudden, unpredictable or unforeseen events. These capabilities can be enhanced by a station's voluntary upgrade to Next Gen TV, which will enable significant life-saving advances in emergency communications. One need look no further than the recent and tragic fire in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, or the destruction caused by Hurricane Sandy to appreciate the vital role of a reliable communications infrastructure during a time of crisis.

I'd now like to showcase the capabilities of Next Gen TV through a video demonstration.

The next step in making these improvements a reality is FCC approval of the petition that NAB jointly filed with America's Public Television stations, the Consumer Technology Association, and the Advanced Warning and Response Network Alliance.

Before I conclude, I want to mention one important item within the oversight jurisdiction of this subcommittee – the recently completed broadcast incentive auction. The FCC has begun the process of relocating – or repacking – nearly 1,000 broadcast television stations. Put simply, the \$1.75 billion repack budget and 39-month timeline are likely insufficient for such a massive endeavor and Congressional action is needed.

Thank you again for inviting me here today. I look forward to answering any questions.