

**STATEMENT RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANT ROLE THAT LOCAL
BROADCASTERS PLAY IN ALERTING THE PUBLIC DURING WEATHER
EMERGENCIES**

MAY 31, 2012

In recent years, unpredictable and sometimes violent weather has struck our nation. During the months of May and June, tornados are most likely to strike the great Hoosier state. Getting to safety before a tornado strikes can be the difference between life and death. Success in that effort depends on access to timely information. For this reason, I want to thank local broadcasters in the 7th District of Indiana for providing critical information during weather emergencies.

Last year, a violent storm caused the sudden collapse of the concert stage at the Indiana State Fair. This tragic incident killed seven and severely injured dozens more. It could have been much worse. Timely alerts from local broadcasters enabled Fair officials to clear the Midway minutes before the storm struck, potentially saving the lives of hundreds.

Radio and television stations are our nation's most reliable network for distributing emergency information. When electrical lines are knocked down and Internet and mobile networks become inoperable, broadcasters are the last line of defense—transmitting public safety information over the airwaves.

Local television and radio stations play a critical role in ensuring public safety. Now is the time to expand their ability to provide emergency notifications. Increasingly, the American people have access to mobile phones. By equipping these devices to receive FM radio signals, millions of Americans could depend on their mobile phones to provide critical information in advance of a weather emergency.

As a former official with the Department of Homeland Security, I know first-hand how cell phone networks can become overloaded and inoperable during an emergency. By adopting this technology, broadcasters can provide timely information to mobile phones—enabling the American people to take shelter in advance of a weather emergency. I call upon my colleagues in Congress, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Federal Communications Commission and the mobile phone industry to work together to expand the reach of local broadcasters in providing critical information during a weather emergency.

I want to once again thank local broadcasters in my district for their essential role in promoting public safety.