

The Honorable Gordon H. Smith
President and CEO



April 20, 2011

Dear Member of Congress:

The purpose of this letter is to bring to your attention the fact that more than 241 million Americans rely on local radio to provide news, entertainment and important information. As such, radio has long served as a critical lifeline for information during natural disasters and local emergencies, utilizing the emergency alert system (EAS) – a proven, reliable warning service. As demonstrated during recent national and international disasters, even when mobile networks become clogged or falter, broadcast radio has the ability to stay on air.

The devastation caused by the earthquake in Japan last month was a gripping reminder that cellphone networks can be unreliable during disasters. As reported in the Wall Street Journal and New York Times, cellphone reception was down in Tokyo, but local broadcasters stayed on the air, delivering news and images of the devastation to the Japanese people.

Last weekend, more than 200 tornadoes ripped across the South, killing at least 45 people and causing millions of dollars in damage. In North Carolina alone, the storm killed at least 23 people and injured hundreds. In the rural areas damaged by this storm, downed cellphone towers and severed utility lines have hampered communications and clean-up efforts. While some radio towers were also damaged, many radio stations were able to stay up and running, providing vital, life saving emergency information to residents.

For the safety of your constituents, incorporating broadcast radio into mobile phones should be a critical component of any next-generation wireless emergency alerting solution.

Radio-enabled mobile phones are not dependent on the cellular infrastructure that often goes silent during emergency situations. Local radio broadcasters, armed with redundant generators, are able to stay on the air through the duration of such disasters. If mobile phones offered local radio broadcasts, citizens could receive instantaneous emergency alerts on the go and be better prepared with necessary and life-saving information.

In an effort to ensure the safety of the American public and encourage the continued implementation of radio capability in mobile phones, I respectfully **ask that you refrain from cosponsoring H. Con. Res. 42, the Creativity and Innovation Resolution.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Smith', written over a horizontal line.

Gordon H. Smith