

When Severe Weather Strikes, AM Radio is a Lifeline



Introduction

In times of crisis, natural disasters and extreme weather, Americans turn to AM radio to receive critical updates. Far too often, radio may be the only way people can communicate during emergencies. Due to AM radio's vast reach and resiliency, this medium is an indispensable tool for public safety and the backbone of our nation's Emergency Alert System (EAS).

Following the devastation of Hurricanes Helene and Milton this fall, numerous local and state officials have urged members of Congress to pass the bipartisan AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act to ensure AM radio remains accessible in all vehicles and continues to be the essential link for timely, life-saving information during emergencies.



Quotes



“Last week, we saw #Helene leave unimaginable destruction across our state and the Southeast – leaving many areas without power or cellphone service. During these emergencies, it is vital that authorities are able to share life-saving information. **That is why I am leading a bipartisan coalition urging Congress to pass the AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act** to ensure cars stay equipped with this important technology and increase public safety.”



– [Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody](#)

“As our nation recovers from Hurricane Helene, we’re reminded of the necessity of dependable lines of communication in crisis. **Communities rely on AM radios for life-saving info during disasters.**”

– [Iowa Attorney General Brenna Bird](#)



“AM radio is a vital resource that helps Americans prepare for hurricanes and receive emergency communication during and after storms. That is why it’s crucial to keep AM radio stations in vehicles...We must be proactive in our emergency communication and AM radio helps do just that.”



– [Rep. Laurel Lee \(FL-15\)](#)

“The devastating cell and power outages caused by Hurricane Helene underscore why I’m working to pass legislation to ensure all cars continue to come with AM radio, which can be a lifeline in emergencies like this one.”

– [Rep. Frank Pallone \(NJ-06\)](#)



“AM radio stations play a critical role in providing emergency alerts, local news and weather reports for millions of Americans. This underscores the need to strengthen the resiliency of these stations, especially as extreme weather – like we’ve witnessed with hurricanes Helene and Milton – threatens to take them offline...I’ll continue working with my colleagues to advance commonsense legislation that fortifies our critical infrastructure, including AM radio stations, the electric grid, and our telecommunications networks.”



– [Rep. Bob Latta \(OH-05\)](#)

“I cannot stress enough the importance of AM radio systems to our state’s emergency response during hurricanes, tornadoes and other natural disasters. **AM radios provide essential communication services to all of our state’s citizens** as they have the unique ability to be independent from local infrastructure. Only the Good Lord could count the enormous amount of people in Louisiana who have received timely news updates and emergency instructions from AM stations like WWL. Beyond Louisiana, **AM radio is the preferred medium for our Emergency Alert System across our Nation** and 90% of the United States’ population is covered by AM stations.”



– [Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry](#)



“The only way they’ve been getting information is through AM/FM radio... we take it for granted but it’s critical in disasters like this...”



– [Former FEMA Administrator Pete Gaynor](#)

“#HurricaneMilton during and after the storm, **AM/FM Radio is often the only source of weather alerts** and updates in your community.”

– [Former FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate](#)



“Each of our states experience natural disasters and other public safety emergencies. While those disasters vary across our many communities – from hurricanes in Florida to tornadoes in Iowa – **AM radio is the constant support network that provides life-saving information to our citizens.** During emergencies, it is vitally important that federal, state and local officials be able to deliver emergency warnings and other information to their citizens.”

– [Attorneys General](#) from Florida, Iowa, Utah, West Virginia, Texas, South Dakota, Montana, South Carolina, Arkansas, Louisiana, Indiana and Mississippi

“As communications across the region remained severed for many, **the voices on the radio became a lifeline for locals in dire need of reliable information;** sharing updates on road closures; opening the phone lines to anyone with working wireless or landline phones; and reassuring listeners that help is on the way from government organizations and volunteer groups.”

– [CNN article](#), “Local broadcasters become lifeline for hard-hit North Carolina communities in wake of Helene’s wrath”

“Helene roared through the mountains, leaving more than a million people in the disaster zone without water, power and spotty cell service. But what they did have was the radio. **For days, WWNC host Mark Starling and producer Tank Spencer were a lifeline, serving as a proxy dispatch service** to help coordinate wellness checks and connect the stranded with nearby resources.”

– [“CBS Evening News”](#) story, “How a local radio station became a lifeline after Helene roared through North Carolina”