

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554**

In the Matter of	)	
	)	PS Docket No. 15-94
Implementation of Multilingual Wireless Emergency Alerts	)	
	)	

COMMENTS OF THE NATIONAL HISPANIC MEDIA COALITION

Brayan Ortiz-Ramos
Randy Abreu, Esq.
Daiquiri Ryan, Esq.

National Hispanic Media Coalition
12825 Philadelphia Street
Suite C
Whittier, California 90601
(626) 792-6462

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I. INTRODUCTION

In a time defined by unprecedented ecological challenges and an increasingly interconnected society, a functional, inclusive, and accessible emergency alert system has never been more critical or imperative.¹ The Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) proposition to revamp the Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) system, with a particular emphasis on multilingual capabilities and broader alert templates, is both timely and necessary. This introduction aims to contextualize the importance of these efforts while setting the stage for a comprehensive commentary on the FCC's proposals.

The foundation of any democratic society rests on the well-being and safety of its populace. As the world grapples with the escalating impacts of climate change and ecological degradation, the role of effective communication systems, particularly in times of emergency, becomes not just a matter of convenience but of outright survival.² The FCC's initiative to enhance the WEA system recognizes the critical need to reach all community members, regardless of linguistic background or access to technology, with timely, understandable, and actionable information during crises. The legal framework surrounding public safety and emergency preparedness mandates a commitment to inclusivity and accessibility. The WARN Act of 2008, under which the WEA system was established, envisioned a nation where individuals, irrespective of their location or the device they use, could be promptly alerted to imminent threats.³ Building on this foundation, the proposed enhancements to the WEA system

¹ Chu, E.W., and J.R. Karr. "Environmental Impact: Concept, Consequences, Measurement." *Reference Module in Life Sciences*, 2017, B978-0-12-809633-8.02380-3. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-809633-8.02380-3>. Isbell, Forest, Patricia Balvanera, Akira S Mori, Jin-Sheng He, James M Bullock, Ganga Ram Regmi, Eric W Seabloom, et al. "Expert Perspectives on Global Biodiversity Loss and Its Drivers and Impacts on People." *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 21, no. 2 (2023): 94–103. <https://doi.org/10.1002/fee.2536>.

² *Los Angeles Times*. "Fire Exposes Maui's Shocking Lack of Preparation." August 18, 2023, sec. World & Nation. <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2023-08-18/maui-fire-exposes-islands-shocking-lack-of-preparation>.

³ "Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) | Federal Communications Commission," September 25, 2023. <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/wireless-emergency-alerts-wea>.

reflect an understanding of the evolving demographics of the United States and the multifaceted nature of contemporary threats – from natural disasters exacerbated by climate change to human-made emergencies.

With significant portions of the population speaking languages other than English at home, the ability to receive alerts in one's primary language is a critical factor in ensuring the effectiveness of emergency communication.⁴ Pressingly, the escalating frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters call for a dynamic and forward-thinking approach to emergency alerts.⁵ By incorporating templates that address emerging threats in addition to the ones outlined by the FCC, the WEA system can serve as a vital tool in mitigating the impact of ecological crises. However, these enhancements hinge on their implementation and the extent to which they consider the diverse needs and circumstances of the population. Recognizing this, our Public Comments herein delve into the FCC's proposals, examining the potential impact of multilingual alerts and expanded (new subject-area) templates. It will explore the considerations involved in implementing these changes, including the importance of ensuring that alerts are culturally sensitive, easily understandable, and accessible to individuals with varying levels of technological literacy. Our commentary will also address the challenges faced by populations that have historically been underserved by emergency communication systems, including non-smartphone users and individuals who may not know how to set language preferences on their devices.

As the FCC moves forward with its plans to enhance the WEA system, it is incumbent upon policymakers, stakeholders, and the community at large to engage in a thoughtful dialogue

⁴ US Census Bureau, “Nearly 68 Million People Spoke a Language Other Than English at Home in 2019.” Census.gov (Accessed March 21, 2024)

<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2022/12/languages-we-speak-in-united-states.html>.

⁵ Ebi, Kristie L., Jennifer Vanos, Jane W. Baldwin, Jesse E. Bell, David M. Hondula, Nicole A. Errett, Katie Hayes, et al. “Extreme Weather and Climate Change: Population Health and Health System Implications.” *Annual Review of Public Health* 42 (April 1, 2021): 293–315. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-012420-105026>.

on how best to implement these changes. The proposals under consideration represent a significant step towards creating a more inclusive, responsive, and effective emergency alert system but failure to implement them correctly could prove a costly mistake.

II. EMERGENCY ALERTS MUST ENHANCE LANGUAGE CLARITY TO ENSURE UNIVERSAL SAFETY IN CRISIS FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Pursuant of a society where every individual, irrespective of their primary language, has equal access to life-saving information, the National Hispanic Media Coalition (NHMC) asserts that language should not be a barrier to safety. We propose meticulous edits that will ensure messages are not simply precise in their linguistic form, but that are also unambiguous and resonant with the widest possible non English-speaking—including Spanish-speaking—audiences.

Clarity lies in the transmission of messages that are straightforward and easily understood. In an emergency, an individual's mental load is significantly increased; it is essential that alerts are immediate in their clarity and concise in their delivery.⁶ The proposed revisions to the WEA system's Spanish language templates are driven by these principles, aiming to eliminate potential misunderstandings that could be consequential in crisis situations. Current templates, while functional, may inadvertently include colloquialisms or constructions that are not universally understood across the spectrum of non-English-speakers and Spanish-speakers.⁷ This includes those of varying educational backgrounds, regions, and cultural contexts. For instance, terms that are commonplace in one Spanish-speaking country may be entirely foreign or carry different connotations in another. The specificity of our edits included in our comments

⁶ McEwen, Bruce S., and Peter J. Gianaros. "Central Role of the Brain in Stress and Adaptation: Links to Socioeconomic Status, Health, and Disease." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1186 (February 2010): 190–222. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-6632.2009.05331.x>. Center for Disease Control. "This Is Your Brain on Emergencies | Blogs | CDC," November 7, 2016. <https://blogs.cdc.gov/publichealthmatters/2016/11/this-is-your-brain-on-emergencies/>.

⁷ Lipski, John M. *Varieties of Spanish in the United States*. Georgetown University Press, 2008. <http://www.scopus.com/inward/record.url?scp=70649083119&partnerID=8YFLogxK>. Ardila, Alfredo. "Who Are the Spanish Speakers? An Examination of Their Linguistic, Cultural, and Societal Commonalities and Differences." *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 42, no. 1 (February 1, 2020): 41–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986319899735>.

seeks to bridge these divides, selecting terminology that is the most widely recognized and instructions that are straightforward. The objective is to sculpt messages that can be swiftly processed and acted upon; complex sentence structures are simplified, words that carry multiple meanings are replaced with more direct terms, and passive constructions are reformed into active voice to prompt immediate action.

We have also meticulously evaluated the existing templates to identify areas where complexity could be reduced. This includes analyzing technical jargon that could be simplified without sacrificing the message's integrity. Our goal is to strip away any linguistic excess and present the core message in its most potent form. For instance, a phrase such as "Resguárdese ahora en un subterráneo o en una habitación interior en el piso más bajo de algún edificio resistente" may be condensed to "Busque refugio inmediato en el lugar subterráneo más cercano o en una habitación sin ventanas en la planta baja de un edificio seguro." Furthermore, we recognize the need for cultural relevance within the language employed. The alerts must not only inform but also resonate with the intended audience. Emergency alerts should not alienate or confuse.

A. Specific Edits to Spanish Language Alert Templates

NHMC has drafted detailed edits to the Spanish-language Alert Templates, which can be found in Appendix A herein. These proposed edits aim to enhance clarity, accessibility, and cultural relevance of the alerts for Spanish-speaking communities.

Our modifications to the Spanish-Language Alert Templates are designed with emergency scenarios in mind, incorporating precise rephrasing for better understanding, culturally pertinent messages, and adaptations for the linguistic variety among Spanish speakers. Acknowledging the reality that some community members might encounter these emergencies for the first time, it's vital to offer guidance that is not only straightforward and actionable but

also culturally attuned. We've made efforts to ensure that the language and content are inclusive, especially for those with limited English skills. Each suggested change is crafted to simplify the messages, eliminate technical language, and guarantee that the directives are immediately comprehensible and actionable.

B. Ownership In Translation Services: A Shift Towards Community Involvement

The landscape of legal and institutional translation services is at a crossroads where the ownership of these services could significantly impact their effectiveness and authenticity. There's a growing consensus that for translation services to serve their purpose genuinely, they should be owned and operated by individuals who speak the languages they are translating.⁸ Ownership by native speakers or those deeply ingrained within the linguistic community offers an unparalleled understanding of nuances and cultural references that are often missed by external entities.

A shift towards minority-owned translation services can address the current gaps in cultural competence. Legal and institutional settings are rife with specific terminologies and concepts that, if not accurately translated, could lead to misunderstandings with potentially serious consequences. Native speakers, with their intrinsic understanding of the language and its cultural subtleties, are better equipped to navigate these challenges, ensuring that translations are both accurate and contextually appropriate.

Additionally, empowering communities by entrusting them with the responsibility of translation fosters a sense of ownership and inclusion. This enables a participatory approach where community members are not just passive recipients but active contributors to the

⁸ Executive Office of the President, Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, *Federal Register* (Feb. 22, 2023), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/02/22/2023-03779/further-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal>.

translation process. This involvement can lead to more trust in the translated materials, encouraging greater engagement with life-saving emergency alerts.

The argument for minority ownership also extends to the economic benefits. By investing in community-owned translation services, there is potential for economic empowerment within these communities through job allocation and adjacent industries.⁹ However, transitioning to this model requires addressing challenges such as standardizing quality across diverse languages and ensuring the scalability of small, community-focused translation services. This, ultimately, calls for a collaborative effort between governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and community leaders to create supportive frameworks that uphold high standards of translation while promoting minority ownership.

III. WEA TEMPLATES SHOULD ACCOUNT FOR CLIMATE DISASTER EVENTS THAT ARE ON THE RISE

NHMC commends the FCC for its ongoing efforts to improve the WEA system. As we move forward, we recognize the paramount importance of ensuring that emergency communications are inclusive and equitable, providing timely and accessible information on typical emergency events to all members of our diverse communities.

A. Inclusive and Comprehensive Templates that Account for Climate Disaster Events are Important

Climate change is causing a wide array of emergencies across the globe, affecting ecosystems, human health, and economies.¹⁰ In light of the escalating climate crisis, we urge the FCC to broaden WEA templates to encompass alerts for emerging climate disaster events, such as severe winter storms and extreme heat waves. These phenomena disproportionately impact

⁹ Tamara Cabrera, *The Translation and Interpreting Industry in the United States*, *Cervantes Institute at FAS - Harvard University* (Feb. 23, 2017),

<https://cervantesobservatorio.fas.harvard.edu/en/reports/translation-and-interpreting-industry-united-states>.

¹⁰ United States Environmental Protection Agency, *Impacts of Climate Change*, <https://www.epa.gov/climatechange-science/impacts-climate-change> (last visited, April 8, 2024).

vulnerable populations and necessitate swift, precise alerts. An agile and intentional approach to these emergencies is crucial to adequately respond to the rapidly evolving climate landscape.

In February 2021, Texas grappled with unprecedented low temperatures during a historic winter outbreak. As snow and ice rendered roads impassable, the state's electric grid operator could no longer manage the power supply, resulting in millions being left without electricity and facing water disruptions.¹¹ The Great Texas Freeze of 2021 resulted in the deaths of 246 people, caused by a combination of exposure to extreme-cold, disruptions to dialysis or oxygen treatment, the freezing of medical devices and medication, disruption of hospice care, and motor vehicle accidents caused by hazardous road conditions.¹²

In contrast to the Great Texas Freeze, the increasing prevalence of extreme heat requires us to ensure that our WEA system is adapted to effectively address these surging temperatures in order to protect vulnerable populations. During the deadly heat wave that blanketed the states of Oregon and Washington in June of 2021, about 600 more people died than would have been typical.¹³ Vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, the homeless, and outdoor workers, are disproportionately impacted by extreme heat.

NHMC emphasizes the urgent need to design alert systems that consider the increasing frequency of climate-related emergencies, prioritizing the protection of vulnerable populations most at risk. To achieve environmental justice, it's crucial that these alerts are accessible and easily understood by all, including those who speak non-English languages and individuals with

¹¹ Texas Tribune Staff, *Texas power outages: Nearly half the state experiencing water disruptions as power grid operator says it's making progress*, Texas Tribune (Feb. 18, 2021) <https://www.texastribune.org/2021/02/18/texas-winter-storm-power-outage-ercot/>

¹² Brian Donegan, *Great Texas Freeze Killed Nearly 3 Times More People than Hurricane Harvey*, Fox Weather (Feb. 14, 2022) <https://www.foxweather.com/extreme-weather/great-texas-freeze-killed-nearly-3-times-more-people-than-hurricane-harvey>.

¹³ Nadja Popovich & Winston Choi-Schagrin, *Hidden Toll of the Northwest Heat Wave: Hundreds of Extra Deaths*, NY Times (Aug. 11, 2021) <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/08/11/climate/deaths-pacific-northwest-heat-wave.html>.

limited literacy, through the use of clear, simple language and universal symbols, enhancing comprehension for diverse communities.

B. Special Considerations for Vulnerable Populations

Our efforts to make the WEA system as inclusive and effective as possible require special attention to the particularly vulnerable segments of our population: those experiencing homelessness, individuals with disabilities, the elderly, and workers who spend the majority of their time outdoors, such as farmworkers. Each of these groups encounters unique challenges during emergencies, necessitating tailored approaches to ensure their safety and access to critical information. For individuals experiencing homelessness, the scarcity of traditional alert systems and the dire lack of safe shelters during crises highlight the need for alerts specifically designed to guide them towards secure locations amidst extreme weather conditions and other emergencies. Such dedicated alerts could be life-saving, directing them to immediate safety and necessary resources.

Equally crucial is making emergency alerts fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. This effort should encompass the provision of American Sign Language (ASL) translations for the deaf and hard of hearing, alongside visual and audio alerts crafted to meet the needs of those with visual impairments. Collaborative efforts with disability advocacy groups are essential to ensure these adaptations truly serve the diverse needs within the disability community, ensuring no one is left uninformed in times of crisis.

Moreover, farmworkers and other outdoor workers are disproportionately affected by extreme weather events, from scorching heat waves to severe storms, posing significant risks to their health and safety. Implementing targeted alerts that provide these workers with real-time information about hazardous environmental conditions and necessary safety precautions is

critical. These alerts would offer guidance on when to seek shelter and how to protect themselves effectively, thereby mitigating the risks associated with their exposure to the elements.

By addressing the unique challenges faced by these vulnerable groups, we can enhance the inclusivity and effectiveness of the WEA system, ensuring that every individual, regardless of their circumstances, has access to the information needed to stay safe during emergencies.

C. Strategies for Effective Implementation

To ensure the WEA system serves every community member effectively, a comprehensive strategy focused on inclusivity and responsiveness is paramount. This approach hinges on three key practices: robust community engagement, thorough testing and evaluation, and strategic partnerships for widespread alert distribution.

Engaging with community organizations directly linked to vulnerable populations is a cornerstone of this strategy. These organizations offer invaluable insights and feedback, which are critical for refining the WEA system to address the specific needs and circumstances of diverse community members. By listening to those on the front lines, the system can be tailored to become more accessible and relevant to those it aims to serve.

It is also important to commit to regular testing and evaluation of the WEA system across varied communities. These assessments are essential for gauging the system's effectiveness and inclusivity, identifying areas for enhancement, and implementing changes that ensure all community members can receive and understand emergency alerts. Such proactive evaluations pave the way for continuous improvements, adapting to emerging needs and technologies.

Moreover, forming strategic partnerships with local organizations, shelters, and community centers is crucial for expanding the reach of emergency alerts. These partnerships enable the distribution of alerts through multiple channels, ensuring that vital safety information reaches the most vulnerable, including those who may not have access to traditional

communication methods. Through these collaborative efforts, emergency alerts can become a more integrated part of community support networks, offering a lifeline to those in dire need.

By focusing on these strategies, the WEA system can evolve into a more inclusive, responsive, and effective emergency alert system, one that truly serves the entirety of our diverse communities. NHMC is committed to collaborating with the FCC and other stakeholders to enhance the accessibility and effectiveness of emergency alerts, ensuring that every member of our communities has the information needed to stay safe during emergencies.

IV. THE COMMISSION SHOULD CONSIDER NON-SMARTPHONE USERS IN ITS RULEMAKING PROCEEDING

While the WEA system is an important evolution of technology for public safety, the impact of the system is limited in its reach to smartphones and newer phone models. Nationally, seven percent of Latinos do not have access to a smartphone.¹⁴ This percentage is particularly acute in states with large rural areas.¹⁵ This means over four million Latinos do not have a smartphone and are at risk of not receiving WEA alerts in life or death situations.

Some non-smartphone mobile phone models do have WEA capabilities, but not all do. There does not appear to be any easily accessible information to the public about which non-smartphone models can or cannot receive emergency alerts. Even the Commission's own WEA website has limited information, and recommends consumers consult their mobile carriers to find more specific information about their phone's capabilities.¹⁶ In order for the updates to the WEA system to be impactful and meaningful for all Latinos and consumers, NHMC calls on the Commission to include provisions in its rules to significantly discourage or prevent

¹⁴ Russell Contreras, Latinos have the least smartphone access in states with big rural areas, Nov. 16, 2023, <https://www.axios.com/2023/11/16/latinos-rural-states-smartphone-internet-broadband>.

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA), Federal Communications Commission, <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/wireless-emergency-alerts-wea> (last visited on April 8, 2024).

manufacturers from creating, releasing, and promoting non-smartphones without WEA capability.

In addition, the Commission should explore ways to move the market to replace non WEA capable phones with phones that are equipped to provide emergency alerts via the WEA system. In particular, NHMC believes mobile carriers should offer a trade-in program or discounted payment plans to allow consumers to acquire a device that has the ability to receive life-saving information. Other capabilities, such as language preference and set up instructions should be formulated with non-smartphone devices in mind.

V. EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE WEA SYSTEM

There are two critical issues of equity that NHMC believes should be addressed in this Record: supporting non-English speakers, particularly Spanish-speakers who may not be familiar with setting language preferences on their devices, and the importance of the Lifeline program for ensuring all individuals, especially the elderly, receive life-saving alerts.

A. Support for Non-English Speakers with Device Settings

A significant barrier to the effectiveness of the WEA system lies in the presumptive digital literacy of all users, particularly in adjusting devices to receive alerts in their preferred languages. This gap in understanding poses a risk of critical alerts being missed, especially among non-English speakers, such as Spanish-speakers unfamiliar with modifying their phone's language settings. Recognizing this, it becomes crucial for the FCC to initiate a thorough public education campaign aimed at broadening awareness on configuring language preferences on smartphones and other devices, thereby ensuring crucial information is accessible to all, regardless of linguistic background.

To achieve meaningful progress, such a campaign must prioritize collaboration with community anchor institutions and other community-based organizations who are deeply ingrained in the diverse fabric of our society. These organizations are invaluable assets, given their direct outreach capabilities and their trusted status among the communities they serve. By providing hands-on assistance and distributing clear, straightforward instructions on setting up devices to receive WEAs in the user's preferred language, these groups can play a transformative role in bridging the digital literacy divide, ensuring that emergency alerts reach as wide an audience as possible.

In addition, leveraging the advocacy and resources of organizations like NHMC, known for our dedication to digital literacy and equitable access to technology, can significantly amplify the reach and effectiveness of WEAs. Such organizations bring a wealth of experience in engaging with communities that are often the hardest hit by the digital divide. Incorporating their insights into a public education campaign can greatly enhance the resonance of the campaign's messaging across a broad spectrum of linguistic and cultural groups, fostering a more inclusive and effective WEA system.

Through these collaborative efforts, the FCC can ensure that everyone is not only aware but also capable of receiving life-saving alerts in their preferred languages, marking a significant step toward a truly inclusive emergency alert system.

B. The Interconnected Importance of the Lifeline Program to WEA

The Lifeline program is instrumental in bridging the gap between vulnerable populations, including the elderly, and the critical services they depend upon. As the FCC duly recognizes the significance of WEAs, it becomes equally important to highlight the indispensable role of the Lifeline program in guaranteeing that every individual has access to these life-saving, wireless

emergency alerts. In the context of WEAs, the essence of Lifeline's support lies in ensuring that its mobile phone beneficiaries possess a reliable connection for the reception of WEAs.

The FCC should take steps to preserve and fortify the Lifeline program, incorporating provisions that specifically ensure Lifeline services are fully equipped to handle WEAs. This involves a clear communication strategy to inform all Lifeline subscribers about their devices' ability to receive these alerts, coupled with an expansion of educational initiatives aimed at instructing subscribers on the necessity of keeping their devices operational and prepared to receive alerts.

A pivotal aspect of enhancing the WEA system's inclusivity involves collaborating with service providers to refine how alerts are delivered to devices supported by the Lifeline program. This partnership aims to meticulously identify and eliminate any obstacles that might impede the seamless reception of WEAs, ensuring that alerts reach all recipients without delay or disruption. Specifically, the FCC should require that all lifeline providers guarantee their provided devices, whether free or sold at cost, are equipped with and capable of accessing WEAs.

Moreover, the continued support and protection of the Lifeline program must be viewed as a cornerstone of the FCC's strategy for public safety communications. Lifeline is far more than a simple subsidy for telecommunications; it represents a critical safety net, ensuring that those who are most in need remain connected in times of emergency. By adopting measures that reinforce the reliability and effectiveness of the Lifeline program within the broader framework of the WEA system, the FCC will make significant strides toward a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to public safety communications.

VI. CONCLUSION

The fundamental aim of updating the Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) system is to safeguard the public by disseminating critical information during emergencies.¹⁷ As we step into an era fraught with environmental uncertainties and evolving demographic changes, the importance of these updates becomes undeniably critical. Still, if the enhancements to the WEA are not executed with meticulous attention to the needs of all community segments, the very individuals who are most vulnerable — such as immigrant, non-English speakers — may find themselves even further marginalized. Immigrants, non-English speakers, and those adjacent to them, often live in the shadows, beyond the reach of many public services and thus reliant on informal networks for essential information. Their safety is frequently compromised by a lack of access to technology and information, heightened by the fear of exposure and the consequences it may bring.¹⁸ In an emergency, these individuals are disproportionately at risk because they might not receive, understand, or trust the alerts meant to protect them.¹⁹ This is where the significance of a public utility dedicated to social safety, like the WEA, becomes apparent.

A WEA system that does not include robust multilingual support, particularly for Spanish speakers who represent a significant portion of the vulnerable population, could result in ineffective communication of life-saving information. Moreover, alerts crafted without cultural sensitivity may not resonate with or may even be misunderstood by those they are meant to inform, thereby diminishing the likelihood of the desired response. The implications of

¹⁷ “Wireless Emergency Alerts | Federal Communications Commission.” Accessed March 21, 2024.

<https://www.fcc.gov/public-safety-and-homeland-security/policy-and-licensing-division/alerting/general/wireless>.

¹⁸ Villegas, Francisco J. “CHAPTER SEVEN: Strategic In/Visibility and Undocumented Migrants.” *Counterpoints* 368 (2010): 147–70. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42980670>. Stutz, Matthew, Vanessa Rivas-Lopez, Brian Lonquich, and Arshiya A. Baig. “Health Repercussions of a Culture of Fear Within Undocumented Immigrant Communities.” *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 34, no. 9 (September 2019): 1903–5.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-019-05161-w>. IMMIGRANTS RISING. “Personal Stories.” Accessed March 21, 2024. <https://immigrantsrising.org/stories/>.

¹⁹ Guo, Yanan, Shi An, and Tina Comes. “From Warning Messages to Preparedness Behavior: The Role of Risk Perception and Information Interaction in the Covid-19 Pandemic.” *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 73 (April 15, 2022): 102871. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2022.102871>.

inadequately upgraded WEA updates, therefore, extend beyond the immediate risks of a single emergency. It sends a message about who is valued and who is not, who is protected and who is overlooked. The ethical and social imperative to include all layers of society, especially the non-English speaking immigrants who often work in essential but unrecognized roles, cannot be overstated.

Hence, as we consider the implications of these upgrades, it is important to emphasize that a successful overhaul of the WEA system must be rooted in the principle that it is a public utility for social safety, a service that is indispensable to the collective security of society. The FCC's proposals to enhance the WEA system must be implemented with a clear-eyed view of American society's evolving nature. This entails a system design that accounts for linguistic diversity, technological accessibility, and cultural competency. Only through such a comprehensive and inclusive approach can the WEA system truly serve reliably, especially for those who stand to lose the most in times of crisis.

APPENDIX A. EDITS TO SPANISH-LANGUAGE ALERT TEMPLATES

NHMC proposes the following changes to the Spanish-Language Alert Templates. Our modifications to the Spanish-Language Alert Templates are designed with emergency scenarios in mind, incorporating precise rephrasing for better understanding, culturally pertinent messages, and adaptations for the linguistic variety among Spanish speakers. Each suggested change is crafted to simplify the messages, eliminate technical language, and guarantee that the directives are immediately comprehensible and actionable.

I. Tornado:

- A. FCC: Un tornado se ha detectado en esta área. Esta es una situación con peligro de muerte. Resguárdese ahora en un subterráneo o en una habitación interior en el piso más bajo de algún edificio resistente. Si usted está en exteriores, en una casa rodante o en un vehículo, trasládese al lugar más resguardado posible y protéjase de los escombros que vuelan por el aire. Siga los medios de comunicación.
- B. NHMC: Se ha detectado un tornado en esta área. Busque refugio inmediatamente para su seguridad. Si está en un edificio, diríjase a una habitación interior en el piso más bajo, lejos de ventanas. Si está afuera, encuentre un refugio seguro. Evite los escombros voladores. Manténgase informado a través de los medios de comunicación.

II. Flash Flood:

- A. FCC: UNA EMERGENCIA POR INUNDACIÓN REPENTINA está en efecto para esta área. La situación es extremadamente peligrosa y con riesgo de muerte. No intente movilizarse, excepto si es para abandonar un área de inundación o por orden de evacuación.
- B. NHMC: Hay una emergencia de inundación repentina en efecto para esta área. Es vital permanecer seguro. No se mueva a menos que sea para salir de una zona inundada o si recibe una orden de evacuar. Las inundaciones son peligrosas y pueden ser mortales. Busque refugio alto si está en una zona afectada y siga las instrucciones de las autoridades locales.

III. Severe Thunderstorm:

- A. FCC: ADVERTENCIA DE FUERTE TORMENTA ELÉCTRICA en efecto para esta área por vientos DESTRUCTIVOS de 80 millas por hora. Resguárdese en un edificio resistente, lejos de las ventanas. Los escombros que vuelan impulsados por los fuertes vientos pueden ser mortales para quienes no estén resguardados.

- B. NHMC: Alerta de Tormenta Eléctrica Severa: Esta área está bajo advertencia por vientos destructivos de hasta 80 millas por hora. Busque refugio inmediatamente en un edificio sólido, alejándose de las ventanas. Los objetos llevados por el viento pueden ser peligrosos. Permanezca seguro dentro hasta que la tormenta pase.

IV. Snow Squall:

- A. FCC: ADVERTENCIA DE TORMENTA DE NIEVE en efecto para esta área. ¡Baje la velocidad o postergue su viaje! Prepárese para una repentina reducción o ausencia total de visibilidad y hielo en las carreteras con intensas nevadas.
- B. NHMC: Se ha emitido una advertencia de tormenta de nieve para esta área. Por su seguridad, reduzca la velocidad si debe viajar o, si es posible, posponga su viaje. Las condiciones de visibilidad pueden disminuir repentinamente, y las carreteras podrían estar cubiertas de hielo debido a la intensa nevada.

V. Dust Storm:

- A. FCC: ADVERTENCIA DE TORMENTA DE POLVO Y ARENA en efecto para esta área. Prepárese para una repentina reducción o total ausencia de visibilidad. Hágase a un lado. ¡No pierda su vida! Cuando pierda visibilidad, salga de la carretera y ponga el embrague de su vehículo en “estacionar”. Apague las luces y saque el pie de los frenos. Se insta a tomar precauciones adicionales para los niños de corta edad, ancianos y personas con problemas respiratorios.
- B. NHMC: Esta área está bajo alerta por tormenta de polvo y arena. La visibilidad puede reducirse repentinamente. Si está conduciendo, busque un lugar seguro para detenerse: salga de la carretera, coloque el vehículo en 'estacionar', apague todas las luces y mantenga el pie fuera de los frenos para evitar ser confundido con un vehículo en movimiento. Es crucial tomar precauciones, especialmente para niños, ancianos y personas con afecciones respiratorias."

VI. Hurricane:

- A. FCC: UNA ADVERTENCIA DE HURACÁN está en efecto para esta área por vientos peligrosos que pueden causar daños. Esta advertencia se emite hasta 36 horas antes de que las condiciones peligrosas comiencen. Es urgente que complete esfuerzos para proteger vidas y propiedad. Asegure disponibilidad de alimentos, agua, dinero en efectivo, combustible y medicamentos para un mínimo de 3 días. SIGA LAS INSTRUCCIONES DE LAS AUTORIDADES LOCALES
- B. NHMC: Se ha emitido una advertencia de huracán para esta área debido a vientos peligrosos que podrían causar daños significativos. Se espera que las condiciones peligrosas comiencen dentro de las próximas 36 horas. Es esencial que tome medidas inmediatas para protegerse a sí mismo, a su familia y a su propiedad. Prepare un kit de emergencia con alimentos, agua, dinero en efectivo, combustible

y medicamentos suficientes para al menos tres días. Siga atentamente las instrucciones de las autoridades locales y actúe según las recomendaciones para garantizar su seguridad.

VII. Storm Surge:

- A. FCC: UNA ADVERTENCIA DE MAREJADA CICLÓNICA está en efecto para esta área por peligro de inundaciones con riesgo de muerte. Esta advertencia se emite hasta 36 horas antes de que las condiciones peligrosas comiencen. Es urgente que complete esfuerzos para proteger vidas y propiedad. Siga posibles órdenes de evacuación de esta área para evitar muertes por ahogo o aislamiento sin acceso a los servicios de emergencia.
- B. NHMC: Se ha emitido una advertencia de marejada ciclónica para esta área debido al alto riesgo de inundaciones peligrosas y potencialmente mortales. Las condiciones peligrosas se anticipan para comenzar dentro de las próximas 36 horas. Es vital actuar ahora para proteger a las personas y bienes. Preste especial atención a las órdenes de evacuación emitidas por las autoridades locales para evitar riesgos de ahogamiento o quedarse aislado sin acceso a servicios de emergencia.

VIII. Extreme Wind:

- A. FCC: Una ADVERTENCIA DE VIENTOS EXTREMADAMENTE FUERTES está en efecto para esta área por peligro inmediato de fuertes vientos con riesgo de muerte. Resguárdese AHORA en alguna habitación interior de un edificio resistente y lejos de las ventanas. Proteja su cabeza de escombros que vuelan impulsados por el viento. ¡NO salga en medio de la calma del ojo del huracán! Los vientos pronto volverán a ser peligrosos.
- B. NHMC: Esta área enfrenta un peligro inmediato por vientos extremadamente fuertes, con un alto riesgo de situaciones potencialmente mortales. Busque refugio ahora mismo en una habitación interna de un edificio sólido, alejado de ventanas, para protegerse de escombros voladores. Es crucial proteger su cabeza y cuerpo. Si experimenta una calma repentina, no salga al exterior; esto puede ser el ojo del huracán, y los vientos peligrosos volverán rápidamente.

IX. Test Alert:

- A. FCC: ESTA ES UNA PRUEBA del sistema nacional de alertas de emergencia inalámbricas (National Wireless Emergency Alert System). El propósito es mantener y mejorar las capacidades de alerta y de advertencia a nivel federal, estatal, local, Tribal y territorial, y evaluar la capacidad nacional de las alertas y advertencias públicas. El público no necesita hacer nada.
- B. NHMC: Este mensaje es una prueba del sistema de alertas de emergencia. El objetivo es verificar y mejorar nuestras capacidades de alerta y advertencia a

todos los niveles: federal, estatal, local, tribal y territorial, así como evaluar la eficacia del sistema para las alertas y advertencias públicas. No es necesario que tome ninguna acción. Agradecemos su comprensión.

X. Tsunami:

- A. FCC: ADVERTENCIA DE TSUNAMI. Una serie de grandes olas y fuertes corrientes podrían afectar las zonas costeras cercanas a su área. Usted está en peligro. Aléjese ahora mismo de las aguas costeras y diríjase a terrenos elevados o lejos de la costa. Manténgase alejado de la costa hasta que las autoridades le avisen que puede regresar sin peligro.
- B. NHMC: Se ha emitido una advertencia de tsunami debido a la posibilidad de grandes olas y fuertes corrientes en las zonas costeras cercanas. Su seguridad es la prioridad. Evacue las áreas costeras inmediatamente y diríjase a un terreno más elevado o a una distancia segura de la costa. Permanezca en un lugar seguro y no regrese a la costa hasta que las autoridades confirmen que es seguro hacerlo.

XI. Earthquake:

- A. FCC: ¡TEMBLOR O TERREMOTO DETECTADO! Agáchese a nivel del suelo, cúbrase, espere. Protéjase.
- B. NHMC: ¡Se ha detectado un temblor o terremoto! Actúe ahora: Agáchese al suelo, cúbrase bajo un mueble resistente y protéjase la cabeza y el cuello con los brazos. Manténgase en esa posición hasta que las sacudidas cesen.

XII. Boil Water:

- A. FCC: ¡ALERTA! HIERVA EL AGUA en su área. El agua en su comunidad podría enfermarle. Use agua embotellada si está disponible. No beba agua del grifo, aunque esté filtrada, no la use para cocinar o lavarse los dientes ni para limpiar su hogar. Hiérvala antes. El agua debe hervir por lo menos TRES MINUTOS. Enfríe el agua antes de usarla. No use cubos de hielo preparados con agua sin hervir. Si usa leche preparada para su bebé, use la que viene lista (no la que requiere agua). Asegúrese de que sus mascotas no beban agua sin hervir. Siga los medios de comunicación locales.
- B. NHMC: ¡ALERTA! NECESARIO HERVIR AGUA. El agua de su zona podría causar enfermedades. Prefiera usar agua embotellada. Evite consumir agua de la llave, incluso filtrada, para beber, cocinar, lavar dientes o la limpieza doméstica. Hierva el agua DURANTE AL MENOS TRES MINUTOS antes de usarla. Deje enfriar el agua hervida antes de cualquier uso. Evite el uso de hielo hecho con agua no hervida. Para alimentar a su bebé, opte por leche lista para consumir que no requiera añadir agua. Proteja a sus mascotas evitando que beban agua sin hervir. Manténgase informado por los canales de comunicación locales.

XIII. 911 Outage:

- A. FCC: ALERTA POR INTERRUPCIÓN DE SERVICIOS 911 en esta área. En caso de emergencia, contáctese con las autoridades policiales, de bomberos, de asistencia médica u otros servicios de emergencia, llamando directamente a sus teléfonos locales. Puede no obtener ayuda si llama al 911.
- B. NHMC: Fallo en Servicio 911 en su zona. Si necesita ayuda urgente, llame directamente a los números locales de policía, bomberos, ambulancias o cualquier otro servicio de emergencia. El 911 puede no estar disponible.

XIV. Avalanche:

- A. FCC: ADVERTENCIA DE AVALANCHA para esta área. El rápido movimiento de nieve inestable puede ocurrir repentinamente, con peligro de daño físico o muerte, y podría bloquear caminos y dañar propiedades en las áreas afectadas. ABANDONE esta área. NO vuelva al área tras la evacuación hasta que las autoridades se lo indiquen. No se recomienda viajar en
- B. NHMC: Se ha emitido una alerta en su área. El agua de grifo actualmente no es segura y podría causar enfermedades. Utilice agua embotellada si está disponible para beber, cocinar, lavarse los dientes y limpiar. Si no tiene agua embotellada, hierva el agua del grifo durante al menos tres minutos antes de enfriarla y usarla. Evite usar hielo hecho con agua no hervida y utilice fórmula infantil premezclada para bebés. Asegúrese también de que las mascotas consuman solo agua que ha sido hervida y enfriada. Manténgase informado a través de los canales locales de comunicación para actualizaciones.

XV. Fire:

- A. FCC: ADVERTENCIA DE INCENDIO en esta área. Evacúe a su familia y mascotas ahora, sin demoras. La visibilidad del área disminuirá y los caminos podrían resultar bloqueados. Si usted no abandona el área ahora, podría quedar atrapado, resultar herido o morir. Prepárese para una reducción de la visibilidad, denso humo y dificultad para respirar. Maneje con cuidado. Manténgase atento ante la posible presencia de personal de seguridad operando en el área y siga sus instrucciones.
- B. NHMC: Se ha declarado una emergencia de incendio en esta área. Evacue de inmediato con sus seres queridos y mascotas, sin demora. Las condiciones van a empeorar, con la visibilidad reducida y posibles bloqueos en los caminos. Si no evacua ahora, corre el riesgo de quedar atrapado o sufrir daños graves. Anticipe humo denso y dificultades para respirar. Si tiene que conducir, hágalo con extremo cuidado y esté atento al personal de emergencia y siga todas sus instrucciones.