

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: FCC Response to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria

Thank you to the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau for this report capturing how our communications networks fared during this sad season of hurricane damage. Your bullet points and charts elegantly summarize resources deployed, waivers granted, and the state of network recovery. There are so many people—in the public sector and private sector—who have performed Herculean feats to help keep communications up and running and communities impacted by storms safe and informed. They deserve our sweetest praise and deepest gratitude.

But let's not kid ourselves, this is not enough. When these devastating hurricanes began to batter our coastlines, I called for a full Commission report on these storms. We need to know what worked, what didn't, and where we can improve our communications infrastructure. Once we know the facts, we need a full plan for fixing the communications vulnerabilities we are finding, including how to deal with the impact on 911 and the interactions between social media and emergency response. This report will also need to include a framework for rebuilding so that the communities with damaged communications are not permanently relegated to the wrong side of the digital divide. Because one thing is for sure—Mother Nature's wrath is sure to visit us again. And it is incumbent on us to learn from these disasters to improve emergency response and infrastructure recovery.

One more thing: I believe you don't pull together a report with only the information you amass from sitting in front of your keyboard. You get out. I think the Commission should demonstrate its commitment to the first sentence in the Communications Act—which seeks to focus our energies on public safety—and demonstrate we know how to make those words ring true. Here's how: This agency should hold hearings in Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico—where we are in the midst of a humanitarian crisis impacting more than 3 million American citizens—as soon as feasible. There is ample precedent for this approach—it was used in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy and Hurricane Katrina. I know from my experience you learn more out on the ground than you do sitting on this dais. I hope this agency has the guts to do this. I, for one, look forward to traveling with my colleagues—and making this happen.