

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 671

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives concerning the need for a comprehensive public alert and warning system for the United States, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 31, 2012

Mr. CASSIDY submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives concerning the need for a comprehensive public alert and warning system for the United States, and for other purposes.

Whereas the safety and security of the Nation depends on an effective, reliable, integrated, flexible, and comprehensive system to timely alert and warn the people of the United States, regardless of their location, in situations of war, terrorist attack, natural disaster, imminent danger, or emergency and in other hazardous situations that threaten the health, safety, or well-being of persons or their properties;

Whereas Executive Order 13407, signed by President George W. Bush on June 26, 2006, called for the establishment of a comprehensive public alert and warning system;

Whereas the Federal Emergency Management Agency established the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) and the IPAWS Program Management Office in April 2007;

Whereas in 2009, the Government Accountability Office found that IPAWS had encountered shifting program goals, a lack of continuity of planning, and poorly organized program information;

Whereas the legislative bodies of several States have called on Congress to analyze, evaluate, and assess current Federal, State, territorial, tribal, and local public alert and warning systems, the methods and approaches used by such systems, the potential for integrating such systems and their resources, the effectiveness of such systems, and the ability of such systems to simultaneously alert 100 percent of a geographic location, including remote locations and especially those remote locations where surface communications do not exist, have been compromised, or have been otherwise rendered ineffective;

Whereas natural disasters and terrorist attacks have demonstrated that the United States requires the capability to give early warnings and alerts to all people in danger and especially to special needs populations, including children, persons who are disabled, persons with limited English proficiency, persons who are confined to hospital or nursing home care, and persons who, because of the digital divide or poverty, have limited access to multiple broadcast and other communications pathways;

Whereas to avoid overreach, public alerts and warnings should be given only to those persons in danger, regardless of the size or form of the targeted geographical area, whether it be a single home or location or the entire Nation;

Whereas there should be seamless cooperation, coordination, and education with owners and operators of communications facilities, including all 9–1–1 facilities and facilities of the Emergency Alert System program and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association;

Whereas there should be renewed Federal support for training, tests, exercises, and public education efforts in order that Federal, State, territorial, tribal, local governments, the private sector, and the people of the United States are aware and understand the functions of IPAWS and have access to updates on threats and dangers at all times; and

Whereas these functions should be coordinated by the Federal Communications Commission, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Commerce, and other appropriate Federal departments and agencies, along with emergency response providers and users: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That—

2 (1) the House of Representatives should initiate
 3 and conduct analyses and hearings, acting through
 4 appropriate House committees, to assess the finan-
 5 cial and technical resources that are required to re-
 6 alize the goals of the Integrated Public Alert and
 7 Warning System; and

1 (2) upon completion of the hearings, the com-
2 mittees should cooperate to jointly propose legisla-
3 tion, and utilize such other means and technologies
4 as may be available, to provide for a comprehensive
5 public alert and warning system for the United
6 States.

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