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### **Representative Flynn Comments on First Ever Nationwide Test**

AUSTIN, TX - On November 9, 2011, at 2 PM Eastern Standard Time (EST), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will conduct the first-ever, nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS). In existence since 1994, the EAS is an alert and warning system designed to transmit emergency alerts and warnings to the public at the national, state, and local levels.

EAS Participants broadcast alerts and warnings regarding weather alerts, child abductions, and other types of emergencies. EAS alerts are transmitted over radio and television broadcast stations, cable television, and other media services. The purpose of the November 9th test is to assess the reliability and effectiveness of the system as a way to alert the public during nationwide emergencies.

Representative Flynn stated, "I fully support being prepared for any emergency. Although local and state components of the EAS are tested on a weekly and monthly basis, there has never been an end-to-end nationwide test or a national activation of the system. We need to know that the system will work as intended should public safety officials ever need to send an alert or warning to a large region of the United States. Only a top-down, simultaneous test of all components of the EAS on a nationwide basis can do this."

On November 9th at 2 PM EST, FEMA will transmit the EAS code for national emergencies to the top tier of radio stations in the EAS distribution network. These stations, called Primary Entry Points, will broadcast the EAS code and alert to the next tier of broadcasters, which will rebroadcast the alert to the remaining broadcasters, cable, and other service providers until it has been distributed throughout the entire country and U.S. territories. FEMA and the FCC are taking a number of steps to prepare for this historic test. Both agencies are conducting various outreach activities to educate public safety and other government agencies about the test. In

addition, the FCC has established a website dedicated to the November 9th test which can be found on PSHSB's website at [www.fcc.gov/pshs](http://www.fcc.gov/pshs). Moreover, both agencies plan to work with EAS stakeholders to educate the public in advance of the test.

What can state, tribal, and local government agencies do to help? The FCC suggests a number of steps to prepare for the test. These include:

- Getting the word out about the November 9th test to state, tribal, and local government agencies, as appropriate;
- Working with EAS Participants in your state to ensure that your state's EAS Plan is up-to-date;
- Participating in monthly tests of your state's EAS by getting to know and work with your local broadcasters and cable providers.

The FCC notes that, although the EAS test will be initiated by FEMA, state, tribal and local governments can use the test as an opportunity to work with local broadcasters and cable providers to educate appropriate government officials and staff about the EAS, how it works, when it should be activated, etc. Finally, the FCC asks state, tribal, and local government officials to help inform residents within your jurisdictions in advance of the test, so that they will know what to expect.

Although the nationwide test will be similar to the monthly and weekly tests that the public is used to, there will be some differences. For example, the November 9th test will be longer – approximately three minutes – compared to the usual 2 minute monthly test. Also, the national test will occur almost simultaneously on almost all TV and radio stations, unlike the monthly test, which may occur at different times on different stations.

Additional information can be found at the FCC's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau website at [www.fcc.gov/pshs](http://www.fcc.gov/pshs). The Nationwide EAS Test Countdown has begun. Are you ready?

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