

Good morning, Acting Chairwoman and Commissioners,

Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you regarding "Lessons on the Ground" during natural disasters. My name is Polly Prince Johnson and I'm the President/CEO of the Louisiana Association of Broadcasters. I would first like to thank Justin Cain with the FCC and Travis Johnson with GOHSEP. They both helped me tremendously during Hurricane Ida.

### **Why was broadcast radio and TV so important during Hurricane Ida?**

- With internet and cell service failing across a large portion of South Louisiana, TV and radio were the only means of broadcasting emergency information to a mass audience.
- Our stations became the sole information source for many, and were utilized by the Governor's office, Parish OEP's, law enforcement, FEMA, and public utilities. Our radio and tv stations partnered with each other to bring all the information together and share resources.
- Our employees lived at the stations so that they could be there to help their viewers and listeners during Hurricane Ida.....reporting even when they had sustained damage to their own homes.
- We raised millions of dollars & in kind donations for United Way, American Red Cross, and the Cajun Navy just to name a few. We also had our own food and supply drives in every part of our state and it continues to this day. Our Radio & TV stations were instrumental in saving lives, from getting help to a assisted living community that had no power, to helping families get out of a flooded homes.

As you are all aware, the telecommunication outages were significant and with over a million customers without power fuel was in short supply. Being that fuel was such a critical part in keeping our broadcasters on the air and informing the public, we feel this needs to be addressed. The Gas stations that did have fuel would not accept the fuel letters issued by CISA. Can this be addressed for future storms?

\* August 27<sup>th</sup> received Tropic Storm Ida debris/fuel letters

\* August 29<sup>th</sup> Hurricane Ida hit

\* September 2<sup>nd</sup> received Hurricane Ida debris/fuel letters

\* September 3<sup>rd</sup> CISA industry partners received the revised information on how to get fuel in Louisiana, because I was not on this list, the information wasn't received. I ask that in the future that those broadcast associations that are in harm's way be included in the industry partner list.

Without fuel we are off air. If you haven't lived through a natural disaster, you are unaware of what it means to hear from your local leaders or listen to a familiar voice. I for one had no cell service for 24 hours then it was spotty at best, I also had no internet or power for 9 days. This is the reason broadcasters are on air in times of emergencies.

Regarding DIRS - at 5:04pm on Sunday, August 29<sup>th</sup> I received an email from the FCC had activated DIRS but the Hurricane had already made landfall five hours earlier. I feel that this timeline needs to be re-evaluated.

I would like to mention that our small locally owned broadcasters need to be able to secure SBA loans to help them recover, if the commission could let the SBA know that broadcasters are an important part of communicating with the public that would be helpful.

I am proud of what we do for our communities, and I know that the commission recognizes what broadcasters do for the states that we serve... if we aren't there to inform them.... who will? Big Tech? Thank you for your time.