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Public Information Statement 18-33
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD
1055 AM EST FRI Nov 30 2018

To: Subscribers:
 -NOAA Weather Wire Service
 -Emergency Managers Weather Information Network
 -NOAAPort
 Other NWS Partners, Users and Employees

From: Eli Jacks
 Chief, Forecast Services Division

Subject: Soliciting Public Comment through December 31, 2018, on Proposed
360 Character NWS Messages for Select Weather Warnings Carried by WEA

Beginning May 2019, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Rule changes allow for the expansion of Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) from the existing maximum of 90 characters (150 characters for Spanish messages) to a maximum of 360 characters. NWS is soliciting feedback on both the proposed expansion of weather warnings to use the new 360-character maximum and the proposed content of the NWS messages carried by WEA through December 31, 2018.

WEA is a joint effort between the FCC, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the wireless industry that allows emergency alerting authorities to geographically target emergency messages to mobile devices, primarily cell phones.

The NWS messages intended for WEA are included in routinely-produced Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) messages issued by the NWS and routed through the FEMA Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) to wireless carriers who transmit them to wireless customers within the warning area. The warning area is designated as follows:

- Via a polygon defined using latitude and longitude coordinates
- Within a radius from a point
- On a county basis.

The type of designation used is defined via the CAP message associated with specific hazards. More information about CAP and access to current CAP messages can be found here:

<https://alerts.weather.gov>

The expansion of WEA messages up to 360 characters allows the NWS to provide wireless customers with more detailed and actionable information. The NWS will provide messages to WEA for hazards believed to be life threatening and that have consequences that can be mitigated or minimized by immediate action.

While public notification is not anticipated every time a modification is made to the general format of WEA messages, public comment is currently being solicited on the initial format and contents of the 360 character messages proposed for implementation. The language proposed for these messages can be found via the following link:

<https://www.weather.gov/wrn/wea360>

More information about this proposed change can be found at:

https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/WEA_360_PDD.pdf

NWS will continuously review and update the composition of its WEA 360 character messages for life threatening hazards based on social science research, operational service assessments and the continuous study of public feedback associated with all NWS products and services.

Comments on these proposed changes should be directed via email, by December 31, 2018 to:

tropical.program@noaa.gov

A Service Change Notice will be issued after reviewing feedback and finalizing the content of the WEA messages.

Further questions on the use of WEA by the NWS should be directed to:

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National Public Information Statements are online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/notification/archive>

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