

Foster Garvey Helps Secure Vote for FCC's New Groundbreaking Emergency Alert System Code for Missing and Endangered Persons

Client News
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Foster Garvey Newsroom

WASHINGTON, D.C. (August 14, 2024) – Foster Garvey is proud to announce its instrumental role in helping secure the vote for a groundbreaking new Emergency Alert System (EAS) code. On August 7, 2024, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted to implement a new code for Missing and Endangered Persons (MEP). This significant development enhances public safety by enabling targeted alerts for missing or abducted adults from states, territories, and Tribal communities.

The new MEP alert code addresses a critical gap in the current alert system. In 2023, over 188,000 people who fell outside the criteria for AMBER Alerts went missing. This new code will be especially beneficial to Tribal communities, where American Indians and Alaska Natives face a disproportionate risk of violence, murder, or disappearance.

Foster Garvey, representing [Native Public Media \(NPM\)](#), played a crucial role in this process by drafting and filing comprehensive comments before the FCC. These comments highlighted several key areas of concern, including the disproportionate impact on Indigenous communities, the need for a unique event code for endangered adults, and the importance of a unified federal response through the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS).

[Dwayne Sam](#), Of Counsel in the Communications, Telecom and Media practice at Foster Garvey and principal draftsman, commented on the development: "We're honored to have played a key role in securing this vote for a groundbreaking new alert code. This advancement has the potential to significantly address the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women

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and girls, and more broadly, the crisis of missing and endangered persons in Native communities."

The FCC's groundbreaking decision reflects careful consideration of the persuasive arguments presented in the comments submitted by Foster Garvey on behalf of NPM. In a public draft of the forthcoming Report and Order establishing the MEP alert code, the Commission acknowledged many of the points raised and agreed with several suggested approaches, such as encouraging tribes to become IPAWS alerting authorities.

Loris Taylor, President and CEO of NPM, expressed appreciation to Foster Garvey: "The FCC's decision marks a transformative moment for our communities. The implementation of the MEP event code is a major step towards addressing the long-standing crisis of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls. We are grateful for the representation of [Dwayne Sam](#) and [Brad Deutsch](#), the FCC's commitment to public safety and recognition of Tribal communities' unique needs."

Foster Garvey extends a heartfelt thank you to the FCC for their support and partnership in achieving this significant rule change. Implementing the MEP event code represents a critical leap forward in the FCC's efforts to enhance public safety and serve all communities equitably. Foster Garvey looks forward to seeing the profound positive impact this change will have, particularly in addressing the crisis of missing and endangered persons in Native communities.

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