



Jack Markell  
Governor of Delaware  
Chair

Mary Fallin  
Governor of Oklahoma  
Vice Chair

Dan Crippen  
Executive Director

March 13, 2013

The Honorable Greg Walden  
Chairman  
Energy and Commerce Committee Subcommittee  
on Communications and Technology  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Anna Eshoo  
Ranking Member  
Energy and Commerce Committee Subcommittee  
on Communications and Technology  
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Eshoo:

The nation's governors were strong supporters of the public safety spectrum provisions in the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 and are dedicated to implementing the new broadband network for our first responders. Governors believe states will play a pivotal role in successful implementation of the network and should be treated as key partners throughout network planning, development and operation. We appreciate your committee's leadership in passing this landmark legislation and holding the March 14, 2013 hearing entitled, "Oversight of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) and Emergency Communications." We respectfully request that this letter be included in the hearing record.

The public safety spectrum provisions in the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 provided the nation with a unique opportunity to transform first responder communications by facilitating reliable access to modern technologies, ensuring interoperability and nationwide coverage, and creating new efficiencies to help reduce costs. Because of the importance of such a system to help save lives and property, the National Governors Association (NGA) has actively engaged in efforts to implement the broadband network in a manner consistent with the needs of our public safety communities.

For example, last summer NGA submitted recommendations for appointment to FirstNet and established a new project through the NGA Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) to inform key state officials about the opportunities presented by the new law. The NGA Center also established an advisory body of governors' public safety broadband advisors, conducted national workshops and teleconferences, provided guidance to states as they organized for implementation and is preparing to co-host a series of regional meetings with FirstNet this spring. These meetings will bring together teams of state and local officials to discuss plans for the network with FirstNet and engage in an ongoing dialogue regarding states' unique requirements; infrastructure and other assets that could be leveraged to reduce costs; the utilization of public private partnerships and other important issues.

Governors remain disappointed that states were not better represented on the FirstNet board. We have requested that additional state representatives be appointed at the earliest opportunity and urge your

support for a stronger state voice on FirstNet. To help remedy this shortcoming, FirstNet honored an NGA request to establish an advisory body to address state, territorial, tribal and local concerns. This new body is a subcommittee of the required Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) and is chaired by NGA. While we look forward to working through the PSAC to support state and local interests, we will continue to look for additional opportunities to involve state and local representatives.

At our recent NGA conference in February, governors were joined by FirstNet Chairman Sam Ginn and several other board members to discuss network implementation. During the meeting we emphasized that FirstNet must view states as partners in this endeavor, not only to meet the statutory requirements for consultation with states, but more importantly to ensure that key information, processes and expertise within states can be appropriately brought to bear on the full range of FirstNet activities. States have a number of well-established communications and coordination mechanisms with local and tribal governments and public safety organizations whose participation is essential to reduce costs and provide for ongoing network operations.

As you review FirstNet's activities, we strongly encourage you to promote the essential role of states in implementing the broadband network for first responders. Failure to engage early and often with key state and local officials responsible for coordination of first-responder communications will jeopardize the future success of the network. It is our hope that the PSAC and the regional meetings will serve as a catalyst for ongoing and interactive dialogue between states and FirstNet.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue. We look forward to continuing to work with you and FirstNet to make the network a success.

Sincerely,



Governor Jack Markell



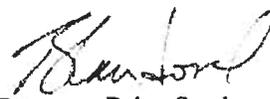
Governor Mary Fallin



Governor Martin O'Malley

Chair

Committee on Health and Homeland Security



Governor Brian Sandoval

Vice Chair

Committee on Health and Homeland Security