

Statement of Representative Anna G. Eshoo
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Oversight of FirstNet and the Advancement of Public Safety Wireless Communications
2123 Rayburn House Office Building
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Last Congress, this Subcommittee achieved a major milestone when it laid the groundwork for the first-ever nationwide, interoperable public safety broadband network. There were many who thought we would never achieve the last remaining recommendation of the 9/11 Commission and there are some who still have their doubts. Today's hearing is an opportunity to hear from FirstNet as well other stakeholders who are directly involved in the implementation of FirstNet and make sure we remain on track.

In the eight months since our Subcommittee's last oversight hearing, significant progress has been made. A General Manager has been named; a 2014 budget has been approved; eleven technical RFIs have been issued with over 300 responses; the FCC has approved technical and operational rules; 54 of 56 state and local implementation grants have been awarded; and FirstNet is well on its way to achieving the goals established in the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012.

But there's no doubt that much more work lies ahead. The next 12 months represent a critical phase for FirstNet. To keep this project on schedule and on budget, FirstNet must continue to leverage the resources of the commercial wireless sector and ensure that it conducts a procurement process that is transparent, that it's based on non-proprietary standards, and promotes competition among software and device manufacturers. I have confidence that under the leadership of Sam Ginn, FirstNet will fulfill its mission to provide our first responders with a state-of-the-art network that is reliable, hardened, redundant and secure.

And finally, while I'm disappointed that the Bay Area's public safety project was unable to reach agreement by last week's deadline, I support FirstNet's decision to protect taxpayer dollars and prevent the use of proprietary technology that could ultimately be incompatible with the nationwide network. We should learn from both the successes and failures of this project and the 6 other BTOP public safety projects and ensure these lessons are applied to FirstNet

I thank each witness for your commitment to pioneering the next generation of public safety communications and I look forward to hearing your important testimony today.