

Statement of Representative Anna G. Eshoo (as prepared)
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Progress Toward a Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network
2322 Rayburn House Office Building
June 16, 2015

In the year and a half since our Subcommittee last held a FirstNet oversight hearing, significant progress has been made. Among the biggest milestones include the release of a strategic roadmap, ongoing consultation with states, and most recently, a draft request for proposals intended to provide FirstNet with extensive stakeholder input.

Thanks to the success of the recently completed AWS-3 auction, FirstNet will soon have the funds it needs to deliver on the first-ever, nationwide interoperable public safety communications network, and with this, Congress making good on the last major recommendation of the 9/11 Commission.

This is a big deal.

Going forward, there are three key areas which FirstNet's leadership should give special consideration:

First, it's critical that wireless carriers of all sizes have an opportunity to partner with FirstNet. In particular, regional and/or rural providers will have an important role to play, both in building the network as well as being able to provide consumers with enhanced wireless broadband service when the network is not needed by emergency personnel.

Second, device competition is critical to the success of FirstNet. \$5,000 public safety radios are out. What's in? Highly innovative, broadband-enabled devices that can transmit live video from a robot sent to assess a suspicious package, view floor plans of a burning building, access medical history of a patient in distress as well as a wide range of other mobile applications. These devices must be truly interoperable and capable of withstanding the physical challenges that first responders face every day.

Finally, FirstNet should ensure its core operations align with the standards and technologies related to Next Generation 9-1-1. As call centers around the country upgrade to NG9-1-1 and become capable of receiving photos, videos and text messages, it only makes sense that this information can be seamlessly transmitted to first responders headed to an emergency situation.

As we work toward advancing the next generation of public safety communications, I thank our witnesses for being here today, and I look forward to your important testimony.