

March 17, 2016

The Honorable Greg Walden  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Walden:

Enclosed please find responses to Questions for the Record and Member requests submitted for David Furth regarding his appearance before the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology on February 2, 2016, at the hearing entitled "Status of the Public Safety Broadband Network."

If you have further questions, please contact me at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

Sean Conway  
Deputy Director

cc: Anna Eshoo, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

Enclosures

## House E& C FirstNet Hearing – February 2, 2016

### The Honorable Frank Pallone

**Mr. Furth, in your written testimony you noted the importance of improving 911 systems concurrently with the rollout of FirstNet. Indeed, without improvements to network resiliency, during a disaster a consumer may not be able to call 911, as his or her carrier’s network may be down. I have introduced the SANDy Act to make these networks stronger so that our phone service does not go down just when we need it the most.**

- 1. In your view, would passage of the SANDy Act make communications networks more resilient and thus allow more consumers to reach 911 call centers during times of emergency or disaster?**

#### **Response to Question 1:**

We have followed with interest your proposals in the SANDy Act. We agree that it is vitally important to focus on the resiliency of our wireless communications networks, particularly during times of disaster, because Americans increasingly rely on wireless service as their primary or sole means of communication. We have been actively working with the wireless carrier community to develop solutions that improve resiliency, help ensure that consumers can reach 911 call centers during disasters, and improve disaster preparation coordination. We expect to have more details to announce on this front in the near future, with many of the developments tracking closely with the spirit of the SANDy Act. We look forward to updating you once these commitments are finalized.

- 2. Are there any actions the Commission could take without additional legislation that could help improve 911 or speed up the arrival of next generation 911 systems?**

#### **Response to Question 2:**

The Commission has been active on numerous fronts to improve 911 and accelerate the transition to Next Generation 911. Key recent actions include the adoption of text-to-911 requirements; strengthening our wireless 911 location accuracy rules to improve location of wireless calls from indoor environments; requiring that essential 911 facilities meet standards for reliability, redundancy, and remote monitoring; and requiring voice service providers to offer back-up power options to residential consumers. We are also considering further action in several ongoing rulemaking proceedings: in November 2014, we proposed a 911 governance regime to make 911 call completion more reliable and to eliminate gaps in local, state, and federal authority; in March 2015, we proposed updates to our Network Outage Reporting System (NORS) to reflect changes in technology and consumer usage. We are also promoting the transition to NG911 through the Task Force on Optimal Public Safety Answering Point Architecture (TFOPA), which just completed its comprehensive report on how PSAPs can integrate NG911 functionality into their operations. In short, the Commission has placed the highest priority on acting within the scope of its authority to modernize and improve the 911 system, and it intends to continue to pursue these initiatives vigorously. However, as Chairman Wheeler has pointed out, completing the transition to NG911 will require the commitment and work of many stakeholders from all levels of government and the private sector.

**The Honorable Gus Bilirakis**

- 1. Please provide a list of all meetings between FCC staff or any of the consultants retained to advise the FCC on the restructuring of the FCC Enforcement Bureau field offices and FirstNet regarding the FCC's plan to downsize its field office operations.**
- 2. Please provide copies of any memorandum, notes, analysis, and emails regarding any meetings with FirstNet produced by FCC staff or any of the consultants retained to advise the FCC on the restructuring of the FCC Enforcement Bureau field offices.**

**Response to Questions 1 & 2:**

The FCC's Field Office Modernization initiative is not an issue within my portfolio as Deputy Chief in the FCC's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau. Based on conversations with my colleagues in the Enforcement Bureau, I understand that during the preparation of the Field Modernization report that recommended these changes, EB and the FCC's consultants met with dozens of parties with an interest in the field modernization effort. It is my understanding that on public safety matters, the EB staff and consultants met with independent experts, EB field agents, and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), as well as public safety organizations such as the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) and the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC). PSHSB staff participated in some of these meetings at which public safety issues were discussed. However, neither I nor other PSHSB staff participated in any meeting held with FirstNet as part of the field modernization effort, nor am I aware of any such meeting occurring.

I can tell you that the Commission is fully committed to supporting FirstNet and working with the first responder community to resolve issues in the field. For example, it is my understanding that EB, in close coordination with PSHSB, has reached out to FirstNet to establish lines of communication and ensure that EB is prepared to address any potential interference issues when FirstNet becomes operational. I also understand that our field offices have already engaged in targeted outreach to FirstNet pilot projects in Denver and LA, advising the points of contact about our interference resolution capabilities. In addition, I understand that our field staff is prepared to share the results of preliminary surveys of potential harmful emitters that may impact the FirstNet spectrum in key markets. According to my colleagues in EB, our field offices responded to virtually all public safety interference complaints last year within 24 hours. My colleagues in EB are confident that the new field structure will continue to provide the same level of exemplary service.