



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS®

HAROLD A. SCHAITBERGER
General President

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General Secretary-Treasurer

February 26, 2020

The Honorable Mike Doyle
Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bob Latta
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Doyle and Ranking Member Latta,

On behalf of the nation's 320,000 professional fire fighters and emergency medical responders, I urge you to enact legislation to repeal Section 6103 of Title VI of Public Law 112-96, which preserves the T-Band frequency spectrum (470 MHz – 512 MHz) for public safety radio communications networks.

Enacted in 2012, Section 6103 mandates the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) auction the T-Band frequencies (470-512 MHz) by February 22, 2021. It further requires existing public safety system operators to clear the spectrum within two years. T-Band public safety communications systems exist in 11 major metropolitan areas, including: Boston, Chicago, Houston, Miami, New York, Philadelphia and Washington DC.

Without a repeal, the relocation of the systems operating on the T-Band spectrum must occur. There is insufficient public-safety narrowband spectrum available for this purpose in most of the large markets—a reality that led to the utilization of T-Band spectrum in the first place.

Even if the allocation of public safety spectrum is possible, the cost associated with shifting away from T-Band is tremendous. This move is estimated to cost more than \$5.9 billion. Originally, it was envisioned these funds would be recouped from the auction of the T-Band spectrum. However, industry analysts are doubtful the auction revenues will raise enough funds to offset the costs that will be incurred by cash strapped public safety agencies.

Given the tremendous fiscal challenges and the absence of available spectrum to relocated public safety communications systems, Congress must urgently pass legislation to repeal the requirement for the FCC to auction and reallocate the T-Band spectrum.

Thank you for your consideration and your leadership on important issues to our nation's professional fire fighters and emergency medical personnel. We look forward to continuing to work with you to safeguard and preserve the critical public safety radio communications networks.

Sincerely,

Harold A. Schaitberger
General President