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February 25, 2020

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Submitted for the Hearing on Strengthening Communications Networks to Help  
Americans in Crisis

### **National League of Cities Comments Concerning Network Resilience**

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member Walden:

On behalf of the nation's more than 19,000 cities, towns and villages, we appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the critical matter of improving communications network resiliency in times of emergency. City leaders depend on consistent connectivity in times of crisis and need to be kept aware in real-time of any outages that could impact their residents or public safety workers during emergencies. As copper landlines degrade and more residents shift to VoIP or mobile telephone service, our communities face increased challenges in communicating with residents during power outages or extreme weather events.

Local officials must be able to communicate information and alerts to residents, particularly in the event of evacuation or shelter in place notices. Residents must be able to reach their local public safety answering points (PSAPs) when they dial 9-1-1. Leaders and first responders must be able to communicate with each other reliably. And crucially, communities must be made aware when that communication is not possible, so that they can react in a timely fashion and respond appropriately.

We support action by this committee to increase the reporting and information sharing with impacted local leaders and PSAPs during and after emergency events and network outages. We also support action by this committee to ensure that communications networks and their backup power and operational systems are robust enough to meet the emergency needs of their locations, which may vary by community.

We also urge the committee to advance H.R. 451, the Don't Break Up the T-Band Act. As you are aware more than a quarter of all Americans live in a metropolitan area that would be negatively impacted by the planned T-Band spectrum auction, and no feasible alternative to that spectrum band exists for the current public safety users. Preserving the T-Band and repealing Section 6301 in Title VI of P.L. 112-96

will ensure that public safety agencies are able to continue using the networks that governments have spent millions of dollars to build and maintain.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clarence E. Anthony', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Clarence E. Anthony  
CEO and Executive Director  
National League of Cities