

# NENA

## The 9-1-1 Association

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1700 Diagonal Road | Suite 500 | Alexandria, VA 22314

March 8, 2023

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Chair, House Committee on Energy and  
Commerce

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Ranking Member, House Committee on  
Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Bob Latta  
Chair, House Subcommittee on  
Communications and Technology

The Honorable Doris Matsui  
Ranking Member, House Subcommittee on  
Communications and Technology

On behalf of the National Emergency Number Association (NENA), I write in reference to your upcoming hearing on March 10, 2023; "Defending America's Wireless Leadership." NENA has long appreciated the importance of establishing effective spectrum policies and the relationship of those policies to national security. However, we believe ensuring effective emergency response systems for our citizens is equally, if not more, important to our nation's security. Thankfully, ensuring a reliable and secure communications network and improving public safety, can be accomplished together.

Last year, Congress considered legislation as part of the Omnibus bill that would have advanced both of these important goals. It would have extended the FCC's auction authority and established a spectrum pipeline to promote continued U.S. leadership in wireless, while also using the proceeds from spectrum auctions to provide funding for Next Generation 9-1-1. We strongly supported that legislative framework last year, and we urge Congress to consider it this year. This agreement had bipartisan support in both houses of Congress.

We understand and appreciate that the upcoming hearing is singularly focused on spectrum policies, including extension of the FCC's auction authority, and not on how proceeds from the auctions would be used. However, due to the importance of funding for Next Generation 9-1-1 systems, we are asking for your vocal support in your opening statement for auction revenue to support public safety and funding for Next Generation 9-1-1 – "public spectrum for public safety."

Our nation's 9-1-1 systems are vital to our communities. Each and every day, our citizens depend on these critical systems to get the help they need. Unfortunately, most of our 9-1-1 systems today rely on outdated technologies that can't meet the requirements of today's communications systems. Moreover, these systems are failing at an increasing rate, which places our citizens and our nation at risk. Nationwide implementation of Next Generation 9-1-1 must be considered a national priority. Enactment of the legislative framework considered last December would ensure that it is.

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As your Committee considers spectrum policies in the current Congress, we urge you to include provisions that would use spectrum auctions to fund Next Generation 9-1-1. Federal funding is needed to ensure that all citizens across the country have access to effective, reliable, and secure emergency response systems. A failure to address this critical issue puts our nation at risk.

Respectfully,



Brian Fontes  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Emergency Number Association