

1. A July 7, 2025, letter from NYSAC to House and Senate Commerce Committee leadership.
2. A letter from NCDIT to Richard Hudson regarding NG911.
3. A September 9, 2025, letter from APCO International letter Energy and Commerce Committee leadership.
4. Testimony from the International Association of Fire Chiefs.
5. A March 17, 2025, letter from first responders to House and Senate leadership.
6. A March 21, 2025, letter from organizations representing state legislatures, state chief information officers, mayors, cities, and counties to House and Senate Commerce Committee leadership.
7. A letter from NHMA and other organizations to House and Senate Commerce Committee leadership.
8. A September 9, 2025, letter from public safety coalitions to House Energy and Commerce Committee leadership.
9. A July 28, 2025, letter from Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns to House Energy and Commerce Committee leadership.
10. Testimony from the Fraternal Order of Police.
11. Statement for the record from Intrado.
12. A September 9, 2025, letter from Norma Torres to Committee leadership.
13. An article titled, “9/11’s failures led to a first-responder network — which will vanish if Congress doesn’t act.”



NYSAC
— NEW YORK STATE —
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

515 Broadway, Suite 402, Albany, New York 12207

Phone: (518) 465-1473 Fax: (518) 465-0506

www.nysac.org

President: Hon. Benjamin Boykin II, Westchester County

Executive Director: Stephen J. Acquario, Esq.

July 7, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
Senate Committee on
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
House Committee on
Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
House Committee on
Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20510

RE: First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) Sunset Provision

Dear Senator Cruz, Senator Cantwell, Representative Guthrie, and Representative Pallone:

The New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) strongly urges Congress to eliminate the statutory sunset provision for the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) and ensure its continued operation beyond February 2027.

NYSAC is the voice of county government in New York State, representing all 62 counties. Our members encompass diverse geographies from the rural North Country and Finger Lakes regions to the suburban Hudson Valley and urban centers like New York City. Counties serve as the backbone of public safety infrastructure, directly operating and coordinating essential services, including 911 dispatch centers, emergency medical services, sheriff's departments, and comprehensive disaster response operations. Reliable and prioritized communications are critical to fulfilling these responsibilities and ensuring the safety of the public and first responders alike.

FirstNet has become a critical element of the public safety communications system in New York State. Its dedicated, secure broadband network enables firefighters, law enforcement, emergency medical services providers, and other emergency personnel to maintain reliable communication during both routine operations and large-scale emergencies and natural disasters. Unlike commercial networks, FirstNet is built specifically for public safety, with features like priority access, preemption capabilities, and federal oversight that ensure first responders can stay connected even when commercial systems are overloaded or unavailable.

Committed to counties since 1925

Albany, Allegany, Bronx, Broome, Cattaraugus, Cayuga, Chautauqua, Chemung, Chenango, Clinton, Columbia, Cortland, Delaware, Dutchess, Erie, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Genesee, Greene, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Kings, Lewis, Livingston, Madison, Monroe, Montgomery, Nassau, New York, Niagara, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, Orange, Orleans, Oswego, Otsego, Putnam, Rensselaer, Queens, Richmond, Rockland, St. Lawrence, Saratoga, Schoenectady, Schoharie, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Suffolk, Sullivan, Tioga, Tompkins, Ulster, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Westchester, Wyoming, Yates



Beyond enhancing coordination during emergencies, FirstNet has made measurable progress in extending services to rural and hard-to-reach areas. These improvements have reduced longstanding coverage gaps that previously compromised response capabilities in many of our counties.

With nearly 30,000 public safety agencies and over seven million connections nationwide, FirstNet has an essential role in modern public safety operations. Congressional action is now needed to ensure it continues serving those who protect our communities. We respectfully urge Congress to act swiftly to eliminate the statutory sunset provision and preserve this indispensable resource for the nation's first responders.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Stephen J. Acquario
Executive Director

cc: New York Congressional Delegation

Committed to counties since 1925

Albany, Allegany, Bronx, Broome, Cattaraugus, Cayuga, Chautauqua, Chemung, Chenango, Clinton, Columbia, Cortland, Delaware, Dutchess, Erie, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Genesee, Greene, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Kings, Lewis, Livingston, Madison, Monroe, Montgomery, Nassau, New York, Niagara, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, Orange, Orleans, Oswego, Otsego, Putnam, Rensselaer, Queens, Richmond, Rockland, St. Lawrence, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Suffolk, Sullivan, Tioga, Tompkins, Ulster, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Westchester, Wyoming, Yates



The Honorable Richard Hudson, Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications & Technology
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Hudson:

I want to sincerely thank the Committee for its steadfast dedication to exploring and promoting the incredible potential of Next Generation 911 (NG 911) beyond North Carolina. This revolutionary technology has not only enhanced our ability to respond to emergencies swiftly and reliably but has also established a national standard for exceptional 911 services, something we are immensely proud of.

At the heart of our NG 911 system is a dedicated and secure network built specifically for 911 traffic and related data, seamlessly integrating the advanced FirstNet Wireless Solution. This network ensures seamless connections, continuous communication, and rapid, effective responses to 911 calls.

Our strategic investment in developing this network has dramatically increased the safety of our citizens by providing vital services—at no cost to local governments managing 911 calls.

I strongly encourage you and the Committee to advocate for legislation and funding that supports the expansion and implementation of NG 911 in other states. We are steadfast in our belief that this issue extends beyond state lines and is a critical national mission that offers peace of mind and essential support to those in need. Your leadership can help ensure every community benefits from the secure, resilient capabilities NG 911 provides, creating a positive impact that reaches beyond our state.

Hurricane Helene in 2024 vividly demonstrated the effectiveness of NG 911 during emergencies. When the storm hit North Carolina, 19 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) in the western regions experienced connectivity issues. Thanks to our robust and secure private network dedicated to 911 communications, we quickly and securely rerouted calls to 23 alternative PSAPs statewide. From September 26 to 28, we handled an impressive 90,000 emergency calls across the state — representing a 55% increase compared to the previous year.

In June 2025, major associations called on Congress for funds to support the nationwide deployment of NG 911, highlighting the need to replace outdated systems for improved reliability and security.

I am genuinely excited about the opportunity to work with you and your colleagues to address this vital issue. Another key focus is reauthorizing the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority), which plays a crucial role in strengthening public safety communications. In North Carolina, FirstNet is a vital part of our emergency response framework, providing an essential backup for our PSAPs. This dedicated, secure, and separate network redundancy is also provided at no cost localities for the PSAPs that choose to participate.

The advancements NG 911 offers to public safety communications are truly extraordinary, enabling us to serve our citizens more efficiently and dependably during crises. I urge you to take bold action to ensure all Americans have access to this life-saving technology. Supporting the reauthorization of the First Responder Network Authority is also crucial for maintaining secure and reliable connections to our 911 services. We welcome questions about our model and look forward to engaging in meaningful discussions on this topic.

Thank you for your commitment to improving public safety communications and your dedication to policies that protect the well-being of the American people. Together, we have the chance to make a lasting difference!

Sincerely,

Teena Piccione

Teena Piccione
Chairman, North Carolina 911 Board
Secretary and State CIO of North Carolina



JOSH H. STEIN
GOVERNOR

MELANIE A. JONES
NC 911 BOARD VICE CHAIR

TEENA W. PICCIONE
SECRETARY & STATE CHIEF
INFORMATION OFFICER
NC 911 BOARD CHAIR

L.V. POKEY HARRIS
NC 911 BOARD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Honorable Richard Hudson, Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications & Technology
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Hudson:

I want to sincerely thank the Committee for its dedication to taking the time to understand and promote the potential of Next Generation 911 (NG 911) beyond North Carolina and into other parts of the country. Through this transformative technology, North Carolina has not only responded to emergencies faster and more reliably but has also set a national standard for exceptional 911 services that we are genuinely proud of.

The backbone of our NG 911 system is its ability to operate on a dedicated, secure network that exclusively handles 911 traffic and related data, integrating the innovative FirstNet Wireless Solution. Our strategic investment in creating this network has significantly enhanced the safety of our citizens, providing invaluable services at no cost to the local governments that handle 911 calls.

I strongly encourage you and the rest of the Committee to advocate for legislation and funding to expand NG 911 implementation in other states. This effort is not just a local matter; it's a vital national priority that offers peace of mind and crucial support to those in need. Your support can help ensure every community benefits from the secure, resilient capabilities NG 911 provides, positively affecting our state and beyond.

The 2024 storm, Hurricane Helene, exemplifies NG 911's capabilities during crises. When the storm struck North Carolina, 19 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) in the western areas faced connectivity issues. Thanks to our robust private network dedicated to 911 communications, we were able to promptly and securely reroute 911 calls to 23 alternative PSAPs across the state. Between September 26 and 28, 2024, we handled an incredible 90,000 emergency calls across the entire state, a 55% increase compared to the same period of the previous year.

In June 2025, NASNA, along with APCO International, NENA, and iCERT, sent a joint letter to Congress calling for "essential funds" to support the nationwide deployment of NG 911. The letter emphasizes that federal funding is crucial for upgrading the aging 911 systems across the country, many of which rely on outdated analog technology. These systems are less reliable, less secure, and harder to maintain while trying to meet the growing demands of emergency responders and the public. I am genuinely excited about working with you and your colleagues on this critical issue.

Another key area for action is reauthorizing the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority), which is essential for strengthening public safety. In North Carolina, FirstNet is a vital part of our emergency response system, providing an essential layer of redundancy for our PSAPs. It allows communications to remain uninterrupted, so that response to 911 calls remains quick and effective.

The progress NG 911 is making in public safety communications is genuinely remarkable, allowing us to serve our citizens more efficiently and reliably during crises. I urge you to take decisive steps to ensure every American has access to this lifesaving technology. We welcome questions about our model and are eager to engage. Additionally, your support in reauthorizing the First Responder Network Authority is key to maintaining this secure and reliable link to our 911 services.

Thank you for your continued commitment to improving public safety communications and your dedication to policies that protect the well-being of the American people. Our collaborative efforts will make a difference in the lives of so many!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L.V. Pokey Harris", written in a cursive style.

L.V. Pokey Harris
Executive Director, North Carolina 911 Board
President, National Association of State 911 Administrators (NASNA)

Overview

Next Generation 911 (NG 911) is a custom-built, private internet network (Emergency Services Internet Protocol Network or ESInet) solely dedicated to ensuring a secure and reliable connection between the 911 caller and the 911 call center. In addition to providing a secure connection, the private network enhances communication by delivering calls, texts, images, and videos between North Carolina's Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), while also improving caller location accuracy during emergencies.

Under state law, the North Carolina 911 Board must contract for a custom, private internet network and has partnered with AT&T to serve all 124 PSAPs funded by the Board. Additionally, 22 other agencies, including higher education institutions and law enforcement, have joined the network to enhance public safety during crises.

Contractual Implementation of Next Generation 911 In North Carolina

- Over the last seven years, all N.C. 911 Board-funded PSAPs have switched to AT&T's custom, secure, private internet network.
- N.C. 911 Board-funded PSAPs connect to AT&T's custom, private internet network, ensuring resiliency during network interruptions like fiber cuts or significant damage.
- If a PSAP can't answer 911 calls due to high volume or infrastructure issues, AT&T's custom, private internet network will instantly reroute calls to a designated PSAP, transmitting the caller's phone number and location without delay.
- In March 2023, the N.C. 911 Board approved the FirstNet Wireless Redundant Solution to enhance 911 call resilience for Board-funded PSAPs.
- A first-of-its-kind, 24/7 Network Monitoring and Assistance Center (NMAC) that monitors the NG 911 network is staffed by technicians from the N.C. 911 Board.
- The N.C. 911 Board revised the AT&T NG 911 contract to extend it for seven years, starting November 4, 2024.

Impact

Hurricane Helene struck North Carolina on September 27, 2024, becoming the state's most destructive storm. The NG 911 solution proved essential, confirming the North Carolina 911 Board's investment in this system.

During the storm, AT&T's custom, private internet network and call-handling equipment functioned effectively. Calls to 911 were automatically rerouted from overwhelmed and impacted PSAPs to unaffected ones. At the storm's peak, 19 PSAPs in western North Carolina had their calls redirected to 23 partner PSAPs in other parts of the state, ensuring callers reached trained 911 operators.

The North Carolina 911 Board staff, AT&T, and other vendor partners continuously monitored AT&T's custom, private internet network performance and coordinated efforts to involve additional PSAPs, improving the efficiency of 911 call processing across the state.



**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Mel Maier, CPE
maierm@apcointl.org

HEADQUARTERS

J. Rhett McMillian, Jr. Building
351 North Williamson Boulevard
Daytona Beach, FL 32114-1112
386-322-2500

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

Gregory T. Riddle Building
1426 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
571-312-4400

www.apcointl.org

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2025 – 2026**

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President

Jack Varnado, RPL
jvarnado@LPSO.org

First Vice President

Michael R. O'Connor
moconnor@wescom-9-1-1.org

Second Vice President

Jennifer Reese, CPE
jreese@wccca.com

Immediate Past President

Stephen P. Martini, CPE
Stephen.Martini@nashville.gov

East Coast Region

Brian E. LaMonica, RPL, CPE
James J. McFarland

Gulf Coast Region

Paul A. McCallister, CPE
Ricky A. Rowell, RPL

North Central Region

Jessica M. Loos, RPL, CPE
B. Fred Cummings, RPL

Western Region

Zach Slattery, RPL, CPE
Albert Flores

Commercial Advisory Council

Jessica Long

September 9, 2025

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce

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

The Honorable Richard Hudson
Chair, Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

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

Dear Representatives Guthrie, Pallone, Hudson, and Matsui:

On behalf of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) International,¹ I thank you for your ongoing leadership in advancing public safety communications. As the first responders on the frontlines who answer 9-1-1 calls and coordinate emergency response, APCO's members know firsthand that reliable, interoperable, and secure communications are essential to the protection of life and property. Today's hearing provides an important opportunity to strengthen emergency communications nationwide, including by underscoring the importance of Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) and FirstNet as essential components of a modern, resilient public safety communications ecosystem.

Federal investment is critical to fully deploy NG9-1-1 and provide emergency communications centers (ECCs) with the tools they need to perform their lifesaving work. NG9-1-1 represents a transformative upgrade to our nation's public safety communications infrastructure. By enabling the receipt and exchange of text, data, photos, and video, NG9-1-1 provides ECCs with real-time, actionable

¹ Founded in 1935, APCO is the world's oldest and largest organization of public safety communications professionals. APCO is a non-profit association with over 40,000 members, primarily consisting of state and local government employees who manage and operate public safety communications systems – including 9-1-1 emergency communications centers, emergency operations centers, radio networks, and information technology – for law enforcement, fire, emergency medical, and other public safety agencies.

information. These capabilities will improve situational awareness, enhance decision-making, and allow 9-1-1 professionals to coordinate resources more effectively during emergencies. NG9-1-1 will also strengthen interoperability between local, state, and national public safety systems, ensuring that no community is left behind and that information flows seamlessly across jurisdictions.

Congress can ensure nationwide NG9-1-1 deployment by enacting legislation to establish a federal grant program supporting the transition. The public safety community supports legislative language unanimously passed by the Committee last year as part of the Spectrum Auction Reauthorization Act (H.R. 3565). NG9-1-1 deployment remains a national security and public safety priority, and we call on Congress to take swift action to address this need.

Critical to the success of NG9-1-1 and public safety communications is a dedicated broadband network that ensures first responders can reliably communicate during emergencies. Today, millions of first responders throughout the nation rely on FirstNet, the nation's single nationwide public safety broadband network designed by and for public safety professionals, to carry out their lifesaving missions. This is why we urge Congress to permanently reauthorize the FirstNet Authority before its sunset. FirstNet provides secure, reliable, high-speed connectivity in the field, enabling first responders to receive critical information from ECCs, share real-time situational updates, and coordinate response efforts during both routine and large-scale incidents. Its priority and preemption features ensure that first responders maintain uninterrupted access to communications even during natural disasters and other emergencies that generate heavy network traffic. The independent FirstNet Authority Board, guided by input from public safety leaders, has been critical in ensuring FirstNet remains accountable in delivering reliable support to public safety. The first responders who rely on FirstNet during emergencies deserve certainty and uninterrupted access to this high-speed broadband network.

In addition, we commend the Federal Communications Commission for its unanimous, bi-partisan decision last year to create a Band Manager framework for the 4.9 GHz Band, assign an overlay license to the Band Manager, and permit the Band Manager to enter into a sharing agreement with FirstNet, while protecting incumbent 4.9 GHz licensees. Allowing FirstNet to use the 4.9 GHz Band would give first responders who rely upon the nationwide public safety broadband network to access this critical mid-band spectrum for advanced technologies such as 5G, which will put new life-saving communications tools in the hands of first responders.

Federal support for modernizing public safety communications capabilities and ensuring access to FirstNet as a single, unified dedicated broadband network is essential to maintaining resilient, interoperable, and secure communications for all communities. By investing in NG9-1-1 and FirstNet, Congress will empower all first responders to carry out their missions more effectively and enhance public safety for all Americans.

Finally, as we work to upgrade the technologies relied upon by the public safety community, we must also recognize the critical importance of the people behind these lifesaving systems. Public safety telecommunicators – who answer 9-1-1 calls and coordinate emergency responses – are currently misclassified in the Office of Management and Budget's Standard Occupational Classification system as administrative professionals, rather than the more accurate "protective service occupation." Congress should pass legislation (the 9-1-1 SAVES Act, H.R. 637, in the House and the Enhancing First Response Act, S. 725, in the Senate) to federally reclassify these individuals, appropriately acknowledging their

skill, responsibility, and essential role in protecting our communities.

We thank you for your attention to these essential public safety matters and stand ready to partner with you in moving these important initiatives forward.

Sincerely,

Capt. Jack Varnado
9-1-1 Director
Livingston Parish Sheriff's Office

President
APCO International



Public Safety Communications in the United States

Statement of

Chief Steven A. Locke, CFO, EFO

First Vice President

International Association of Fire Chiefs

presented to the

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY**

of the

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

United States House of Representatives

September 9, 2025

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS
8251 GREENSBORO DRIVE, SUITE 650 • MCLEAN, VA 22102

Good morning, Chairman Hudson, Vice Chairman Allen, Ranking Member Matsui, Chairman Guthrie, Vice Chairman Dunn and Ranking Member Pallone. I am Fire Chief Steven A. Locke, CFO, EFO, Fire Chief and Deputy City Manager of South Burlington, Vermont, and First Vice President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC). For over 150 years, the IAFC has been at the forefront of leading the charge to strengthen public safety communications. I appreciate the opportunity today to discuss the importance of effective public safety communications for fire and EMS departments' mission-critical lifesaving everyday work.

The IAFC represents the leadership of over 1.1 million firefighters and emergency responders. IAFC members are the world's leading experts in firefighting, emergency medical services, terrorism response, hazardous materials (hazmat) incidents, wildland fire suppression, natural disasters, search and rescue, and public-safety policy. Since 1873, the IAFC has provided a forum for its members to exchange ideas, develop best practices, participate in executive training, and discover diverse products and services available to first responders.

America's fire and emergency service is an all-hazards response force that is locally situated, staffed, trained, and equipped to respond to all types of emergencies. There are approximately 1.1 million men and women in the fire and emergency service – consisting of approximately 300,000 career firefighters and 800,000 volunteer firefighters – serving in over 30,000 fire departments around the nation. They are trained to respond to all hazards ranging from earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods to acts of terrorism, hazardous materials incidents, technical rescues, fires, and medical emergencies. We usually are the first at the scene of a disaster and the last to leave.

The 1990s and 2000s: Public Safety's Communications Struggles Come to the Limelight

The overall need for increased communication and collaboration between public safety tends to enter the spotlight during America's most trying times. At the end of the day, representatives of public safety, when they arrive at an incident scene, just want the ability to communicate with one another. Whether that be members of their same agency, a different agency from close by or far away, we realize that to fulfill our mission critical lifesaving work, we must be able to communicate with one another. Interoperability is the ability of emergency response providers and relevant government officials to communicate across jurisdictions, disciplines, and levels of government as needed and as authorized. The Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building bombing in Oklahoma City, OK was one of the first major disasters to highlight the struggles public safety has with interoperability. For example, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) activated 11 different urban search and rescue teams. During the response, handwritten notes were passed back and forth from the incident commanders to these FEMA teams.

September 11, 2001, saw the worst incident of terrorism that America has ever faced. Hundreds of first responders lost their lives that day due to, among several reasons, the lack of interoperability. In an effort to establish situational awareness, the New York Police Department (NYPD) had helicopters flying over the incident scene. It was evident that over time, that the structural worthiness of the twin towers was compromised. Yet, the NYPD had no means to radio into the Fire Department of New York's first responders who were heading up the tower in

the face of imminent danger. The 9/11 Commission identified the breakdown of communications between two agencies during its investigation of the tragic loss of life on that day.

It has now been twenty years since Hurricane Katrina made landfall and devastated numerous states in our Gulf Coast region. The storm surge witnessed on August 29, 2005, practically destroyed the coastal regions of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. In total, about 1,836 deaths spread out between seven states were left in this storm's wake. The response to Hurricane Katrina's aftermath was, and still is, unprecedented. It involved tens of thousands of people trying to save the stricken residents of the impacted states. However, the lack of interoperable communications was staggering. The sheer strength and veracity of this storm knocked out entire communications networks all together, not just a cell site or two. It is not difficult to draw a comparison between lack of a resilient, interoperable communications network and the loss of life. Thankfully, in 2012, the United States Congress provided a solution.

Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network

The above-mentioned incidents highlighted the need for first responders to have their own interoperable communications network, including broadband access for data. Regardless of whether they come from a local, state, federal or otherwise, when times get tough, public safety agencies needed a way to communicate with one another. Thus, the idea of a Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN) was conceived. In 2012, Congress passed the Middle-Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act (P.L. 112-96), which created the federal FirstNet Authority. Most importantly, for the first time ever, 20 MHz of radio spectrum was dedicated strictly for the use of public safety. The NPSBN uses what is known as the 700 MHz (Band 14) of radio spectrum. Because of this exclusive spectrum dedicated to public safety, the NPSBN is able to provide public safety with priority and ruthless preemption on their own dedicated spectrum.

For the NPSBN to be a success, it needed the states to support its development and deployment. After Congress passed the legislation, it either required the opt-in of all 56 states and territories of the United States, or each state and territory needed to stand up their own version of the NPSBN. Recognizing the importance of a truly national public safety communications system, the leadership of all 57 states and territories opted into the deployment of the NPSBN.

Creation and Composition of the Federal FirstNet Authority

As part of the 2012 enacting law for the NPSBN, Congress created the First Responder Network Authority (federal FirstNet Authority). This law created an independent federal agency and tasked it with ensuring that the management of the buildout and deployment of this network was done with proper coordination and oversight. The FirstNet Authority is essential to the overall operation of the NPSBN. One of its main responsibilities is to coordinate with local, state, tribal and federal stakeholders to ensure that the network being built for public safety was going to meet the needs of public safety. For example, fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services (EMS) and 9-1-1 call center personnel are represented on the FirstNet Authority Board. Additionally, the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) provides guidance about public

safety's needs and unique requirements. These groups are the backbone when it comes to governing the NPSBN.

The FirstNet Authority's Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) is composed of over 40 different representatives from various disciplines of public safety, combined with representatives of local, state, tribal, territorial, and federal agencies. This group represents the different facets of public safety who continuously provide feedback and suggestions about how to improve the NPSBN. The FirstNet PSAC ensures that the needs of the public safety end-users are being listened to, and the FirstNet Authority fulfills their mission. At the end of the day, due to this unique public-private partnership, the network operator is not in the driver's seat. Rather, it is public safety as represented by their delegates to the PSAC.

Another important group that contributes to the operations of FirstNet is the independent FirstNet Authority Board. They are also comprised of prominent leaders from not just in public safety, but they also represent local, state, tribal, and federal government entities. The IAFC is proud to have had numerous former Presidents and Board Chairs serve on the FirstNet Authority Board. Currently, our President and Board Chair, Fire Chief Trisha L. Wolford, who is the fire chief of Anne Arundel County in Maryland, serves on the FirstNet Authority Board. These select individuals, appointed by Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information work to ensure that the needs of public safety are fulfilled by the FirstNet Authority.

Public Safety Features Unique to FirstNet

Often, when disaster strikes, cellular communication networks can become overloaded both with public users on the scene trying to obtain information, and those from afar who are trying to obtain details. Downed power lines, damaged cell sites, or even possible complete loss of service also can result from a disaster. Before FirstNet, these issues plagued the public safety agencies' communications. Now, the FirstNet Authority supports a resilient network for reliable public safety communications during a disaster or emergency.

Priority access and ruthless preemption are two of the key tools first responders utilize to save lives. Due to FirstNet's unique set up, this means that public safety users and agencies have priority over commercial users on the network, which ensures that public safety's communications operations are not disturbed or throttled during emergencies. Ruthless preemption ensures that public safety communications are sent reliably during disasters and emergencies. Having this preemption feature always active and always ready for use by public safety is critical to our work. For priority and ruthless preemption to be successful for public safety, it requires a dedicated network core.

The FirstNet core supports the first and only nationwide system that ensures that public safety communications are prioritized and have ruthless preemption. This system ensures that commercial and public safety communications traffic stay separated. It also provides security, deterring bad actors from interfering with public safety communications. Updates to the core itself along with its infrastructure are driven by the FirstNet Authority Board and the PSAC. A standalone network core is key to delivering first responders the reliable communications that they deserve.

A benefit to the FirstNet Authority is the automatic oversight obligations. The current governance structure makes sure first responders sit at the head of the table when it comes to decision-making. For example, fire, law enforcement, EMS and 9-1-1 call center personnel are represented on the FirstNet Authority Board. Additionally, the PSAC provides guidance about public safety's needs and unique requirements. The end users are the ones driving direction of this network. Also, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA); the Department of Commerce's Office of Inspector General (OIG); the Government Accountability Office; and Congress provide further oversight to ensure that FirstNet meets its goals – a level of oversight and accountability that no other carrier can claim. After a thorough open review process, in 2023, the Federal Communications Commission granted a license renewal to the FirstNet Authority for another 10 years.

Recently, the OIG released reports pointing to some areas of improvement in operations for the FirstNet Authority. The IAFC believes this is a necessary step in order to improve the FirstNet Authority's operations for public safety. Most importantly, the IAFC appreciates the OIG's work to ensure that the American taxpayers' hard-earned money is being used in a responsible manner.

The End Users and Examples of FirstNet in Action

The primary users of FirstNet are comprised of public safety representatives from the fire service, law enforcement, EMS, city managers, emergency managers, mayors, government officials, and even Members of Congress. A common misconception is that the NPSBN is just for first responders. Rather, it also supports an entire response ecosystem all tasked with serving the public in a disaster or emergency. Some examples of FirstNet's secondary users are hospitals and healthcare facilities, public utilities along with power linemen, colleges and universities, public and private schools. All of these facets of public safety now rely upon FirstNet to deliver interoperable communications.

Since the inception and deployment of the FirstNet Authority and the NPSBN, FirstNet has been on the scene to countless incidents. From a school shooting to wildfire response, from an 80,000+ attendee Taylor Swift concert to the communities and states affected by hurricanes, FirstNet stands at the ready to support public safety. The network also is supported by a dedicated fleet of various deployable assets which can be used to ensure FirstNet's operations when communications are down.

Here are some recent examples of major FirstNet asset deployments:

- Major wildfire responses, such as those experienced in Los Angeles, CA in early 2025 and New Mexico in 2024.
- Responding to the landfall and aftermath of Hurricanes Milton and Helene in 2024; Idalia in 2023; Ian in 2022; Ida in 2021; and Isaias, Laura, Sally, Delta, and Zeta in 2020.
- Sporadic tornado incidents like those experienced in St. Louis, Missouri in 2025; in Oklahoma in 2024; and Perryton, TX in 2023.

- Various winter storms like Blair and Cora in 2025.
- The 2023 solar eclipse event, which affected numerous states, counties, and cities. FirstNet's operations ensured that areas typically not visited by many citizens were ready to support any challenges they faced.

Short response times are essential when it comes to supporting 9-1-1 calls, especially those dealing with EMS. In 2023, the State of Tennessee became the first state to utilize FirstNet as a backup measure to supplement all of its 9-1-1 call dispatch centers. In 2024, the response to Hurricane Helene saw FirstNet being used to support North Carolina's 9-1-1 dispatch centers. In 2025, areas in Texas experiencing disaster due to flooding utilized FirstNet to support their 9-1-1 dispatch centers.

Removal of the Sunset Provision for the FirstNet Authority

One provision found within the FirstNet Authority's enacting statute is a sunset provision. This was inserted due to the uncertainty of the success of the NPSBN. When Congress created FirstNet, supporters and detractors were unsure of how many users would ultimately utilize these tools for public safety communications. Now, in 2025, those concerns no longer exist. Over 30,500 different public safety agencies utilize FirstNet and the NPSBN using over 1,000 unique devices and deployables that help enhance public safety communications.

In February 2022, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report, [Public-Safety Broadband Network: Congressional Action Required to Ensure Network Continuity \(GAO-22-104915\)](#). This report found that if Congress does not act, the continued operation of the NPSBN would be jeopardized and could result in significant disruption for first responders who rely on the network for emergency responses.

Congress must remove the sunset provision. If Congress does not remove the sunset date for the FirstNet Authority, the GAO reported that public safety may lose both its network and its ability to oversee the FirstNet network and guide its future evolution. In addition, innovation in public safety communications could be stifled if FirstNet's vendors decide network uncertainty is not worth them investing the time, money, and effort to develop new solutions for public safety communications. The following organizations all ask Congress to preserve the federal FirstNet Authority by removing the February 22, 2027, sunset date:

- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- National Fraternal Order of Police
- International Association of Chiefs of Police
- International Association of Fire Fighters
- National Volunteer Fire Council
- United States Conference of Mayors
- International Association of Emergency Managers
- Congressional Fire Services Institute
- National Emergency Management Association

- Major County Sheriffs of America
- National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
- National League of Cities
- National Association of Counties
- National Association of Black Law Enforcement Executives
- National Fire Protection Association
- National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
- International City/County Management Association
- National Governors Association
- APCO International

A Nationwide Transition to Next Generation 9-1-1 Services is Long Overdue

The IAFC is proud to have been involved in the first ever 9-1-1 call in Haleyville, Alabama in February 1968. This event altered the future of public safety communications. As we have seen, technology has begun to surpass the capabilities of the services that legacy 9-1-1 systems provide. The majority of people with a cell phone can text, send pictures, transmit data, and use other means to communicate with one another. Yet, thousands of 9-1-1 centers across America do not have the ability to receive this information. Some even still rely upon technology from around the time that the first 9-1-1 call was made.

American citizens are sorely in need of support to help facilitate the nationwide transition to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1). The IAFC asks that Congress pass comprehensive legislation to fund the nationwide NG 9-1-1 transition. The transition to NG 9-1-1 will allow fire and EMS departments to receive critical data, including location of a patient, video from a fire, or the details of a crash seamlessly from the people on scene. This transition will result in more effective responses to incidents with the goal of saving lives and providing better service.

The Importance of Maintaining AM Radio in Vehicles

Even with all the technological advancements that we have seen recently with public safety communications, redundancy is key. AM Radio continues to be a dependable means of alerting the public when threats are approaching their community. The resilience and simplicity of AM Radio cannot be understated. A proven example of the usefulness of AM radio was seen in 2024 in North Carolina during the landfall of Hurricane Helene. During this time, in Asheville, NC, AM radio operators from station WWNC stayed on the air to ensure their listeners and community stayed informed as the event unfolded. AM radio provided crucial evacuation and shelter information to citizens when other public communications networks were inoperable.

However, there has been a push from auto manufacturers to remove AM Radio from new vehicles as a free, standard service. Without a doubt, this action has the potential to hinder the delivery of lifesaving operations during times of crisis. As we saw in Asheville during Hurricane Helene, AM radio can be used to ensure that public safety communications do not have a single point of failure before, during, and after the storm. These brave heroic AM Radio operators also relayed information during the recovery phase, ensuring the public knew where to go for support. The AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act of 2025 (H.R. 979/S. 315) offers a commonsense solution.

We look forward to working with the House Energy and Commerce Committee to pass this legislation and ensure that the American public receive critical lifesaving information during major emergencies and disasters.

Conclusion

I sincerely thank you for the opportunity to address public safety communications in the United States. The IAFC, along with its many supporting organizations and associations, ask Congress to preserve the federal FirstNet Authority by removing the sunset date. FirstNet is the only service that can provide first responders with priority access and ruthless preemption, on its own dedicated network core with governance established by federal statute. No other telecommunications offering or network provides first responders with these mission critical life-saving tools.

We also ask Congress to take other steps to protect the public. For example, we look forward to working with the committee to pass legislation to upgrade the nation's 9-1-1 system by funding the nationwide transition to an interoperable NG 9-1-1 system. This upgrade will improve the emergency response that local public safety agencies provide to their citizens in need. We also ask Congress to pass commonsense legislation to retain AM radios in cars, so that Americans have access to lifesaving information during disasters and emergencies.

I thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for today's hearing. The IAFC looks forward to working with the committee to ensure that public safety has all the communications tools necessary, on their own dedicated network, with ruthless priority and preemption, on a dedicated core, with oversight in federal statute ensuring the FirstNet Authority can be the best it can be.



March 17, 2025

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Thune, Leader Jeffries and Leader Schumer:

The undersigned organizations and associations write to express our support for the removal of the sunset date for the FirstNet Authority. The FirstNet Authority manages and oversees the nationwide public safety broadband network, which is the only nationwide telecommunications broadband network built

exclusively for public safety. Our group represents various disciplines of public safety, including the fire service; law enforcement; emergency medical services; state and local emergency management; county and municipal leaders; and more. Our members utilize the products and services that FirstNet provides to help save lives. It is imperative that the lifesaving work of the FirstNet Authority last long into the future.

The idea of a nationwide public safety broadband network was born out of a recommendation from the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (“The 9/11 Commission”). On the day of America’s worst ever terrorist attack, many heroic first responders lost their lives due to not being able to communicate with one another. The lessons learned from that horrific day should never be forgotten. Since the release of the 9/11 Commission report, our organizations and associations have advocated for a network that ensures dedicated, prioritized, and reliable connectivity for all first responders: whenever and wherever they need it.

In 2012, Congress passed the Middle-Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act ([P.L. 112-96](#)), which created the FirstNet Authority. For the first time, 20 MHz of radio spectrum was assigned strictly for the use of public safety. This began the process of providing public safety with the tools they need to stay connected. The strong collaboration between government and industry ensures that the contracted needs of public safety are being met through a fully self-sustainable program. The law also created the FirstNet Authority’s Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC). The PSAC is comprised of leaders from all parts of public safety and state and municipal governments. The PSAC ensures that the needs of public safety are being met. If the FirstNet Authority were allowed to sunset, first responders would lose influence over the network that was built for them.

Since the creation of the FirstNet Authority, this program has helped front-line public safety personnel respond to numerous events affecting the everyday lives of American citizens. From large concerts, sporting events, and presidential inaugurations to hurricanes, wildfires, and other natural disasters, FirstNet has enabled critical connections among public safety personnel who have responded to calls for help. For example, FirstNet connected New Orleans responders when a terrorist stole the lives of innocent people in the French Quarter this past New Year’s Eve. It also enabled coordination among the 30 public safety agencies from multiple jurisdictions that responded when a commercial airliner and military helicopter collided in Washington, DC earlier this year. Public safety is committed to ensure continuation of FirstNet and an ability to respond effectively with the right resources, at the right time, in the right way to protect the homeland.

Within the law that created the FirstNet Authority lies a sunset provision. This sunset creates a very uncertain future for the national public safety broadband network and all the advances made in public safety communications since the FirstNet Authority was established. In February 2022, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report, [Public-Safety Broadband Network: Congressional Action Required to Ensure Network Continuity \(GAO-22-104915\)](#). This report found that if Congress does not act, the continued operation of the national public safety broadband network would be jeopardized and could result in significant disruption for first responders who rely on the network for emergency responses. This is unacceptable and we need the help of Congress to pass legislation during the 119th Congress to ensure this does not happen.

The organizations and associations below strongly support the removal of the sunset date for the FirstNet Authority and urge Congress to promptly enact this necessary change in 2025. This program has allowed our first responders to worry less about connectivity and focus more on their lifesaving missions. Public safety is already struggling with rising costs and staff turnover. If dedicated and reliable connectivity is one less thing we must worry about, then the result will be more lives saved. The FirstNet Authority must not be allowed to lapse and should have long-term certainty about its future.

Respectfully,

International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)
National Fraternal Order of Police (FOP)
International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)
International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)
National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC)
United States Conference of Mayors (USCM)
International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM)
Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI)
National Emergency Management Association (NEMA)
Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA)
National Fallen Firefighter Foundation (NFFF)
National League of Cities (NLC)
National Association of Counties (NACo)
National Association of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE)
National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA)
National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT)
International City/County Management Association (ICMA)

cc: The Honorable Brett Guthrie, Chairman, House Energy & Commerce Committee

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Ranking Member, House Energy & Commerce Committee

The Honorable Ted Cruz, Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation

The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation

: sa



THE UNITED STATES
CONFERENCE OF MAYORS



March 21, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
United States Senate

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
United States Senate

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives

RE: Reauthorization of First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet)

Dear Mr. Cruz, Ms. Cantwell, Mr. Guthrie, and Mr. Pallone:

As a coalition of bipartisan membership organizations representing state legislatures, state chief information officers, mayors, cities, and counties, we write to express our support for the reauthorization of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet). We urge Congress to permanently reauthorize FirstNet before its authorization sunsets in February 2027. FirstNet is a public policy triumph, providing broadband connections to over 27,000 state and local public safety agencies throughout the nation. It is critical that Congress act on legislation to eliminate the sunset clause for the agency in order to ensure that state and local first responders continue to have access to the interoperable, nationwide broadband communication network they fought so hard to secure.

The establishment of FirstNet was a direct response to the communication failures experienced during the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Since its inception, FirstNet has been indispensable in ensuring that our first responders have access to a nationwide, interoperable broadband network. This network is critical for providing first responders with the cost-effective connectivity they need to deliver effective public safety services. Without Congressional action, this program will expire in 2027, leaving first responders without the high-speed broadband network they need.

In addition, FirstNet has demonstrated its commitment by investing billions of dollars in federal funding to expanding rural broadband coverage, as required by Congress in the Middle-Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act. By leveraging existing infrastructure and prioritizing rural and underserved areas, FirstNet has significantly enhanced public safety connectivity for these communities.

Currently, FirstNet has over 6 million first responder subscribers across more than 27,000 public safety agencies. This extensive adoption is a testament to FirstNet's success in meeting first responder's need for high quality wireless broadband services. From natural disasters to human-caused emergencies, FirstNet has consistently demonstrated its capability to support our first responders in their mission to protect and serve our communities.

The reauthorization of FirstNet is critical to ensuring that our first responders continue to have access to this essential communication tool. We urge Congress to act swiftly to remove the sunset date for the FirstNet Authority, thereby guaranteeing the continuation of this system for years to come.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to your support in reauthorizing FirstNet and ensuring the continued success of this invaluable program.

Sincerely,




Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director
The United States Conference
of Mayors



Clarence Anthony
CEO and Executive Director
National League of Cities



Matthew D. Chase
Executive Director/CEO
National Association of Counties



Tim Storey
Executive Director
National Conference of State
Legislatures



Doug Robinson
Executive Director
National Association of Chief
Information Officers



Julia Novak
CEO/Executive Director
International City/County
Management Association

Cc: The United States House of Representatives
The United States Senate



The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
Senate Committee on
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
House Committee on
Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
House Committee on
Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20510

RE: First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) – Support for Reauthorization and Sunset Removal

Dear Senators Cruz and Cantwell, and Representatives Guthrie and Pallone:

On behalf of the New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA), the New Hampshire Association of Fire Chiefs (NHAFC) and New Hampshire Association of Chiefs of Police (NHACP), we respectfully urge the U.S. Congress to reauthorize the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) by removing the sunset provision currently set to take effect in February 2027 under the Middle-Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012. Without Congressional action, FirstNet's statutory authority will expire in February 2027, placing a vital public safety asset at risk.

NHMA, NHAFC, and NHACP are nonprofit, nonpartisan, voluntary-membership organizations representing local government members. NHMA represents the interests of all 234 towns and cities in New Hampshire. NHAFC represents the interests of New Hampshire's fire services to ensure that local fire departments have the proper resources to carry out their functions. NHACP represents the interests of New Hampshire's law enforcement community in ensuring that local police departments have the proper resources to help ensure the public's safety. Our organizations agree that ensuring the availability of reliable, interoperable communications for local emergency response is essential.

FirstNet was established in response to the communications challenges experienced during the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Since then, it has become an indispensable tool for local

governments and their public safety agencies. The nationwide broadband network provides first responders with priority and preemption capabilities during emergencies.

In New Hampshire, where our communities range from small rural towns to larger urban centers, reliable emergency communications are fundamental to public safety and disaster response. FirstNet's expansion into underserved and remote areas has helped fill longstanding gaps in coverage, allowing local responders to communicate and coordinate across jurisdictions when it matters most. Municipal leaders throughout the state value the stability and performance that FirstNet brings to law enforcement, fire services, and EMS.

Significantly, FirstNet was built through a public-private partnership model that not only ensured operational accountability but also leveraged existing infrastructure to expand coverage in hard-to-reach areas. New Hampshire municipalities have benefited from this approach, particularly in regions where broadband coverage had previously been unreliable. Continued expansion in underserved areas supports not only public safety but also community resilience and economic vitality.

Additionally, FirstNet operates under a governance structure that includes oversight by the FirstNet Board and input from the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC), ensuring that the voices of local public safety professionals are heard. NHMA and NHAFC support preserving this structure.

Allowing FirstNet's statutory authority to expire in 2027 would introduce uncertainty into local planning, funding, and technology deployment decisions. A clean reauthorization that simply removes the sunset clause would give municipalities the long-term confidence needed to invest in compatible systems, develop applications, and train personnel who depend on uninterrupted access to secure broadband communications.

We respectfully urge the U.S. Congress to take timely action to remove the sunset provision and permanently re-authorize the continued operation of the First Responder Network Authority. Doing so will sustain a vital component of our national public safety communications infrastructure and support the ongoing needs of New Hampshire's municipalities and their emergency services.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and supporting the communications needs of our first responders.

Sincerely,

Margaret Byrnes
Executive Director

NH Municipal Association

Chief James Watkins
President

NH Association of Fire Chiefs

Chief Timothy Crowley
President

NH Association of Police Chiefs

cc: New Hampshire's Federal Delegation



September 9, 2025

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chair, Committee on Energy and
Energy Commerce

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member, Committee on
and Commerce

The Honorable Richard Hudson
Chair, Subcommittee on Communications
and Technology

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

Dear Representatives Guthrie, Pallone, Hudson, and Matsui,

On behalf of the Public Safety Next Generation 9-1-1 Coalition, we thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to public safety communications. As you consider ways to strengthen the nation's public safety communications systems during today's hearing, we respectfully highlight the national security imperative of modernizing our nation's decades-old 9-1-1 systems to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1).

Last Congress, we welcomed House Energy and Commerce Committee passage of H.R. 3565, the Spectrum Auction Reauthorization Act by unanimous consent, which included funding to establish a nationwide NG9-1-1 federal grant program, consistent with our Coalition's core principles. We were pleased to have strong bipartisan support for the bill, as well as the support of all major national public safety associations and key industry stakeholders.

We now turn to your leadership to request action in this Congress. We ask you to ensure that NG9-1-1 is deployed in a fully interoperable, comprehensive, secure, innovative, and reliable manner throughout the country, ensuring no community is left behind and that all Americans can trust that when they call 9-1-1, help will arrive promptly, supported by advanced and reliable technology.

Federal support for NG9-1-1 remains an urgent need. Today's 9-1-1 systems are based largely on technology from the 1960s and 70s, lagging behind the advanced communications capabilities commercially available to the public and leaving networks vulnerable to cyberattacks and natural disasters. A member of the public can instantly send a photo or video to friends and family, yet is often limited to voice communications when calling 9-1-1. Modernizing our 9-1-1 networks is also a national security imperative. As the central point for emergency response, 9-1-1 is a prime target for criminals and bad actors.

With more than 240 million 9-1-1 calls each year, deploying NG9-1-1 is one of the most impactful investments Congress can make in public safety. Every day that passes means 9-1-1 professionals and emergency responders lack the advanced communications tools and cybersecurity resources they need to best protect life and property. NG9-1-1 will begin saving lives in our communities the moment it is deployed.

With your assistance, we can lead the world in implementing an advanced and effective emergency response capability, from local emergencies to large-scale disasters, that will protect our communities and save the lives of the public and first responders. We urge you to prioritize federal support for NG9-1-1 this Congress to ensure that every community benefits from secure, resilient, and modern emergency communications. The Public Safety NG9-1-1 Coalition stands ready to work with you in a bipartisan manner to achieve this national security and public safety imperative.

Thank you. Please direct any inquiries to Mel Maier, spokesman for the Coalition, at maierm@apcointl.org.

Sincerely,

Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials–International
Congressional Fire Services Institute
Fraternal Order of Police
International Association of Chiefs of Police
International Association of Fire Chiefs
Major Cities Chiefs Association
Major County Sheriffs of America
Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association
National Association of State EMS Officials
National Sheriffs' Association
National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives

July 28, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
Senate Committee on
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
House Committee on
Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
House Committee on
Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Reauthorization of FirstNet

Dear Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, Chairman Guthrie, and Ranking Member Pallone:

The Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, representing all 39 municipalities in the Ocean State, writes to express its support for congressional reauthorization of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) by eliminating the 2027 sunset provision contained in the Middle-Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012.

FirstNet has provided Rhode Island's local governments with a dependable and secure broadband platform built for emergency response. As a statewide alliance of municipal leaders, we know that consistent, interoperable communications are the backbone of effective public safety and emergency coordination whether the incident is a coastal storm, mass gathering, or local infrastructure failure.

The creation of FirstNet in 2012 addressed one of the most critical gaps identified in the 9/11 Commission Report: the inability of first responders to communicate across jurisdictions during large-scale emergencies. Since then, FirstNet has grown to support more than 30,000 public safety agencies and 7 million users nationwide. In Rhode Island, municipal police, fire, and EMS personnel have adopted the platform and rely on it for daily operations as well as large-scale incidents.

FirstNet's statutory commitment to rural and underserved areas has particular relevance here in Rhode Island, where small coastal and inland towns must maintain readiness for weather events, power outages, and transportation disruptions. FirstNet provides these communities with the communications continuity they need to prepare, respond, and recover.

The current sunset date creates uncertainty for our member communities as they plan for long-term technology upgrades, and integration of FirstNet-compatible equipment. Municipalities benefit from policy stability. Congress can ensure that stability by removing the 2027 sunset and affirming the long-term availability of the network.



We thank you for your consideration and your commitment to ensuring that local governments have the tools they need to serve their communities with professionalism and preparedness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. R. Rossi".

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

cc: Rhode Island Congressional Delegation



FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

Testimony of
Patrick Yoes
National President
Fraternal Order of Police

"Public Safety Communications in the United States"

before the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology of the
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Matsui, and the other Members of this distinguished Subcommittee. I thank you for the chance to submit this testimony for the record on the state of public safety communications and the urgent need to reauthorize the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet).

The Fraternal Order of Police is the oldest and largest law enforcement labor organization in the United States, representing more than 382,000 members in over 2,200 local lodges in every region of the country. We represent rank-and-file law enforcement officers who serve in departments of all sizes—from small rural agencies to large urban departments. Our members are on the front lines every day, protecting our communities and relying on effective, reliable communications to do their jobs safely and effectively.

Public safety communications are the lifeline for law enforcement officers, firefighters, EMS personnel, and other first responders. In an emergency, seconds matter, and the ability to communicate seamlessly—whether coordinating a response to a natural disaster, a mass casualty event, or an active threat—can mean the difference between life and death. Our members depend on these systems not just for operational success, but for their personal safety and the safety of the public we serve.

I know this from personal experience. Just over twenty years ago, I was working as a Deputy Sheriff with the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office and I was among the thousands of law enforcement officers and emergency responders who prepared for and responded to Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. I authored a book about my experiences entitled *Chest Deep and Rising, The Hurricane Katrina Nightmare*.

While no communications network could be expected to remain fully operational in such extreme conditions, responders like me were operating in an environment in which the communications infrastructure was crippled; repeater sites were incapacitated by floodwaters, structural failures, and extended power outages which rendered nearly all communications tools inoperable at a time when the need was the greatest.

Fifty-two 911 communications networks were disrupted, and in many cases, communications centers had to be evacuated due to flooding. Vast areas of the affected region had no regular telephone or wireless service. Thousands of the switches and cell towers, which form the region's telecommunications network, were destroyed, inaccessible or left without power. For some agencies, the only means of communication for the first weeks was by personal couriers, which proved impractical due to the level of devastation and flooding that hampered movement. The inability to communicate only compounded the challenges facing first responders. These factors impeded our ability to quickly respond to and subsequently aid the people who needed our help the most during this massive natural disaster.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and while I was serving as the FOP National Secretary, I was invited by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to serve as a member of the *Independent Panel Reviewing the Impact of Hurricane Katrina on*

Communications Networks. As part of my work on that panel, I submitted a report from the law enforcement perspective which can be found [here](#).

Among the issues I outlined were interoperability, the community's lack of access to media outlets to convey accurate information to the public, and insufficient satellite coverage. My recommendations—all made in 2006—included the necessity of training in emergency communications, a credentialing program for technicians working to restore networks in restricted areas, and the need for the assignment of portable communications equipment like mobile towers and antennas.

While we have improved these systems in the last two decades, many aspects of our nation's public safety communications infrastructure remain outdated, vulnerable, and insufficient to meet modern challenges.

Since 1997, the FOP has been an active and reliable partner to the Federal government and to the private sector to find solutions. We have played a leadership role going back to the days of Cyren Call and the Public Safety Spectrum Trust—the ancestors of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) and will continue to do so.

I want to commend recent actions by the FCC that have advanced public safety communications. Last year, the FCC made a landmark decision to authorize the use of the 4.9 GHz spectrum band within the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN) and grant a nationwide license to FirstNet to administer it. This was a hard-fought victory for public safety over private profit. The FOP, along with our partners at the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), campaigned vigorously to protect this dedicated spectrum from encroachment by for-profit companies, critical infrastructure operators, and transportation providers who sought to use it for commercial purposes under the guise of "local control." A fractured, patchwork approach would have lacked the economies of scale needed to drive innovation, leading to underutilization and leaving vast areas of the country—particularly rural communities—unserved. Instead, by integrating the 4.9 GHz band into the NPSBN, FirstNet can now deploy advanced 5G capabilities nationwide, providing public safety with the speed, capacity, and propagation characteristics essential for innovative tools like real-time video sharing, sensor data from wearables, and enhanced location services during emergencies.

This decision underscores the proven success of FirstNet as a public-private partnership dedicated exclusively to public safety. Since its establishment, FirstNet has built and operated a nationwide broadband network that prioritizes first responders, ensuring priority and preemption over commercial traffic. Our members have seen firsthand how FirstNet enhances officer safety and response efficiency, and law enforcement plays a direct role in its governance through the FirstNet Authority Board and Public Safety Advisory Committee. The FOP is grateful to former FCC Chairman Jessica Rosenworcel and current FCC Chairman Brendan Carr for engaging with us and prioritizing the voices of rank-and-file officers in this process. Moving forward, we

look to FirstNet to continue protecting incumbent licensees, coordinating frequencies to avoid interference, and driving expeditious 5G deployment using existing infrastructure.

Interoperability is still a critical issue. Despite advances like FirstNet, challenges persist, as evidenced by reports from the assassination attempt on then-former President Trump last year, where communication gaps between the U.S. Secret Service (USSS) and other law enforcement personnel providing protection at the event may have played a role in the security failures that day. Notably, not all Federal law enforcement agencies, of which the USSS is one, fully utilize FirstNet, which exacerbates these problems. The FCC can help by promoting awareness of 5G benefits on the 4.9 GHz band and combating efforts by commercial entities to dilute public safety priorities. Additionally, the FCC's Industry Traceback Group (ITG) plays a vital role in addressing caller ID spoofing, which fuels dangerous "swatting" incidents that endanger officers and waste resources. We encourage stronger collaboration between the ITG, voice service providers, and law enforcement at all levels to trace and prosecute offenders, even when calls are spoofed. Recently, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has distributed [new resources](#) for "swatting" and hoax threats—which are on the rise again nationwide.

Swatting and spoofing are among the evolving threats and technologies we have to anticipate, as we transition to digital and 5G networks. Protecting these networks from hostile actors—through robust cybersecurity and resilient infrastructure—is critically important. And what comes after 5G? Advances in 6G and beyond will likely be driven by integrating artificial intelligence (AI), edge computing, and expanded spectrum access. This should enable even more sophisticated tools for public safety, such as predictive analytics for threat detection and augmented reality for training. Law enforcement must be at the table to ensure these developments prioritize our needs.

This brings me to the main point of my testimony—the need to reauthorize FirstNet. First and foremost, we agree with the Commission's order that preserves the 4.9 GHz band for public safety, requires priority and preemption over any non-public safety use, and adopts a nationwide framework to support public safety's growing need for dedicated 5G spectrum. This cannot be effectively or realistically accomplished through a fractured, patchwork approach that results in different uses of the band depending upon the geographic area, or even upon the licensee within the same geographic area. This decentralized framework has been in place for 20 years, and the band has remained chronically underutilized. The fact is that for-profit companies in the private sector, critical infrastructure operators, and transportation providers seek to encroach upon public safety's 4.9 GHz spectrum for their own commercial purposes. These efforts are unacceptable to our members whose lives literally depend on the reliability of these communications systems. Organizations like the Coalition for Emergency Response and Critical Infrastructure (CERCI), which represent commercial interests, are making this argument under the false banner of "local control." This approach will not work and the lack of a national strategy could result in commercial entities "cherry-picking" the most desirable areas for 5G investment, while leaving much of the country unserved.

When the FirstNet effort was still taking shape, the FOP and our partners in the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), who together represent the overwhelming majority of the public safety practitioners that use this equipment in the field, were slowly squeezed out of the policy-making process in favor of providers, big technology representatives, and public safety executives. Law enforcement was barely represented and there were no rank-and-file voices at the table at all. This led the FOP and IAFF to oppose those early efforts, and we risk repeating history if law enforcement officers—the rank-and-file whose lives depend on a healthy and robust public safety communications network—are once again sidelined. While we certainly welcome and appreciate the broad support that law enforcement executive organizations representing chiefs and sheriffs have provided to FirstNet, it is the men and women in the field whose lives are on the line.

The FOP has a representative on FirstNet's Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC), which ensures that the needs of public safety are being met. We have a long history of partnership and collaboration to provide our officers in the field. The FOP has confidence in FirstNet, which is one of the reasons we are pushing Congress to reauthorize the program. More importantly, our members who depend on FirstNet have confidence in their communication systems—and it is their lives that are at stake.

The fact is that FirstNet has a decades-long record of success. They have a high-functioning and established relationship with the field and the FOP that has resulted in an ongoing legacy of trust and collaboration. When we need to talk, they listen. When we have a concern, it is addressed. When we have a problem, it is solved.

The FirstNet Authority's authorization is set to expire in February 2027, and without Congressional action, law enforcement officers like those represented by the FOP could lose access to a dedicated, reliable broadband system that has proven its value in real-world scenarios, from hurricanes to active shooter events. Reauthorizing FirstNet—ideally on a permanent basis—will ensure continuity, allow for ongoing investment in 5G and future technologies, and guarantee that public safety remains the priority.

On behalf of our more than 382,000 members, I thank you again for the opportunity to share the perspective of the Fraternal Order of Police with the Members of this subcommittee.



Statement for the Record

Hearing on Public Safety Communications in the United States

Before the House Energy and Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

September 9, 2025

For more information:

Brian Davenport, Chief Strategy Officer, Intrado Life & Safety
bdavenport@intrado.com

Intrado Life & Safety, the nation's leading 9-1-1 provider, thanks the leadership and members of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee for Communications and Technology for holding this important hearing titled, "Public Safety Communications in the United States."

Intrado's mission, since our founding nearly 50 years ago, has always been to save lives and protect communities by helping them prepare for, respond to, and recover from critical events. We are in a unique position in the 9-1-1 ecosystem — standing at the intersection of emergency communications and serving communications providers, state and local public safety agencies, and first responders to ensure the right help reaches the right place quickly.

240 million calls are placed to 9-1-1 every year in the United States. The network that supports these requests for assistance is the backbone of our public safety and, by extension, our national security systems. But our 9-1-1 network is at a crisis point, still running in many parts of the country on antiquated technology that can no longer be patched. It is also under constant threat by bad actors—both domestic and abroad—who want to cause harm by disrupting, destabilizing, and striking our 9-1-1 system. This impacts not only the safety of the public but also our national security.

Next Generation 9-1-1, or NG9-1-1, is a modern emergency response system that incorporates digital and internet-based technologies over an IP-based network. It expands emergency communications beyond the core functionality of the original legacy 9-1-1 system that dates back to the 1960s. It also leverages the enhanced capabilities of IP-based devices and networks and provides end-to-end cybersecurity protections that help thwart attempts to disrupt our public safety networks.

The Federal Communications Commission's July 2024 order establishing a nationwide framework for NG9-1-1 provides needed structure and clarity for state 9-1-1 authorities, localities, and communications providers alike. Under this framework, the transition process is initiated by a state or local entity, which means that funding at the state or local level is a gating factor to moving forward.

Several states and localities are leading the way in the transition – such as North Carolina and Connecticut -- but other parts of the country are in very early stages or have yet to begin. The practical impact is that our nation's 9-1-1 system is currently a patchwork. With communities and jurisdictions at different stages in the process, those that have upgraded to NG9-1-1 must still remain connected to the end-of-life legacy system. This patchwork creates undesirable complexity as well as a cyber-attack surface that is far too broad, far too enticing for bad actors, and far too risky for 9-1-1 authorities and our national security.

NG9-1-1 networks also make it possible to leverage advanced wireless technologies, such as those provided by FirstNet. Public Safety Answering Points are Primary Users on FirstNet, meaning they receive priority and preemptive treatment, and some states – notably Iowa and Tennessee -- have implemented statewide FirstNet wireless backup for their 9-1-1 systems. This backup connectivity can increase access and reliability for PSAPs, even during

network congestion and natural or manmade disasters. We view these capabilities as vital to a strong 9-1-1 system nationwide. As the committee also considers FirstNet Authority Reauthorization, we encourage the committee to provide the public safety community with certainty and assurance that this essential communications resource will continue without lapse and to support the continued success of the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network.

Our networks are only as secure as their weakest link. To ensure our national security and public safety networks are protected from those who wish to cause harm on our homeland by disrupting our ability to provide help to Americans when crisis strikes, we urge Congress to fully fund NG9-1-1.

We are grateful to you and the Subcommittee for holding this hearing and for your commitment to this nation's public safety and national security. We are hopeful our statement will shine a light on the critical need for fully funding NG9-1-1 and the benefits it promises.

NORMA J. TORRES
35TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

2227 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BLDG
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
PHONE: (202) 225-6161
FAX: (202) 225-8671

3200 INLAND EMPIRE., SUITE 200B
ONTARIO, CA 91764
PHONE: (909) 481-6474
FAX: (909) 941-1362

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEES:
STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS
TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT,
AND RELATED AGENCIES

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
SUBCOMMITTEES:
MODERNIZATION, RANKING MEMBER

September 9, 2025

Chairman Brett Guthrie
Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.
Energy and Commerce Committee
2107 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Guthrie and Ranking Member Pallone:

As a former 911 dispatcher for more than 17 years, I know that public safety telecommunicators are critical links in our emergency response system. 911 telecommunicators do far more than simply answer a phone and send for help. When Americans are experiencing the worst, most life-threatening moments of their lives, 9-1-1 dispatchers answer the call – they are true first responders. Dispatchers work during life-or-death situations and on any given day might direct police to a crime that is in progress, provide lifesaving first aid, or speak to a caller on the brink of suicide. I commend you and the entire subcommittee for focusing on this critical part of our emergency response system and I urge the Committee to prioritize legislation and oversight work that strengthens our 911 systems, from reliable technology to programs that support and sustain our 911 telecommunicators, allowing the 911 community to support America during its most desperate and dangerous moments.

No American should call 911 only for the call to go unanswered, whether from technical failure or insufficient personnel. Unfortunately, I have spoken with 911 telecommunicators across the country who detail cyber-attacks shutting down centers, staffing shortages leaving unacceptably long wait times, and inconsistent training that leaves dispatchers unprepared for evolving threats.

America's 911 system needs reliable Next Generation 911 technology (NEXTGEN 911) to remain secure and responsive in our moments of greatest need. I urge the Committee to prioritize NEXTGEN 911 funding. Without this critical funding, our 911 centers rely on old and outdated technology, susceptible to cyber attacks and unable to handle the new data available to help track and locate Americans who call, text, or video call 911 in need of help. Cell phone service providers must meet the legal standards around this technology as well, sharing critical location information to 911 centers to help emergency services respond as fast as possible.

Additionally, as we transition to NEXTGEN 911 systems with advanced IP-based technologies, the need for properly trained and supported telecommunicators becomes even more critical. These sophisticated systems require dispatchers who understand not just how to answer calls, but how to manage complex data streams, coordinate with multiple agencies through integrated platforms, and adapt to rapidly evolving protocols. This is why I support federal training grants through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to provide necessary and appropriate training for 911 centers. Today, as this Committee examines public safety communications challenges, we must recognize that the 911 system's effectiveness depends on having properly trained, supported, and classified telecommunicators at the heart of these critical communications networks. Proper training transforms 911 operators into vital witnesses in criminal investigations, ensuring they can accurately document critical details and maintain chain of custody for evidence. It also allows 911 operators to provide accurate time sensitive medical advice, such as helping with births. Moreover, while technology provides powerful tools for cybersecurity, the human element remains our first and often most effective line of defense against cyber threats—trained dispatchers who can identify suspicious activity and respond appropriately when systems are compromised.

While my 9-1-1 SAVES Act—which reclassifies 9-1-1 professionals as first responders at the federal level—falls under different congressional jurisdiction, the training and technology challenges it addresses are directly relevant to this Committee's oversight of public safety communications. I thank so many police, fire, 911, and other public safety groups across the nation for their support of this bill, including two witnesses at this hearing: Dr. Brian Fontes (Former CEO of NENA) and Sheriff Shannon Dicus (San Bernardino County). The lack of across-the-board standards when it comes to 911 dispatcher training requirements prevents workers from being on the same page and undermines the effectiveness of the communications systems this Committee oversees. Training standards differ dramatically by jurisdiction, where one area might require dozens of hours of one-on-one training, versus another that only requires a few hours. This inconsistency in training standards creates unacceptable safety risks and prevents dispatchers from effectively utilizing the advanced communications technologies and cybersecurity protocols that fall squarely within this Committee's jurisdiction.

These differences can create unacceptable safety risks for the public. The effectiveness of our entire emergency response system depends on skilled telecommunicators who can properly assess situations, coordinate multi-agency responses, and provide critical instructions to callers. Without standardized training requirements, we cannot ensure that Americans receive consistent, professional emergency communications services regardless of their location. When citizens face life-threatening emergencies, they deserve confidence that the telecommunicator responding to their call has received comprehensive, standardized training to effectively coordinate their rescue and provide appropriate guidance during their most vulnerable moments.

My 17 years behind the headset taught me that in those critical moments when someone dials 911, the technology is only as effective as the professional using it. As we deploy Next Generation 911 systems across the country, this truth becomes even more important. Whether it is managing multimedia emergency data, coordinating real-time information sharing between

agencies, or utilizing advanced location services, today's dispatchers need consistent, federally-supported training to effectively operate these life-saving technologies. The challenges facing America's public safety communications system require both technological innovation and workforce investment. As this Committee continues its vital oversight work, I urge you to remember that our most sophisticated networks are only as strong as the professionals who operate them. By supporting legislation like the NEXTGEN 911 Act and the 911 SAVES Act and ensuring adequate federal investment in training and technology, we can build a 911 system that serves the Americans who depend on it in their darkest hours.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Norma J. Torres". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress

9/11's failures led to a first-responder network — which will vanish if Congress doesn't act

By

[Ray Kelly](#)

Published Sep. 8, 2025, 7:00 a.m. ET

6 Comments

/2The video player is currently playing an ad.

Sept. 11, 2001, was a day of unspeakable tragedy.

Twenty-four years later, the images of the World Trade Center in flames still burn fresh in the minds of those who watched from afar and those who experienced it up close.

But amidst the chaos was a group of heroes — firefighters, police officers, paramedics and countless others — who ran toward the danger, risking their lives to save the lives of others.

They were our first responders, and in the face of death, they showed unwavering courage.

What many Americans didn't see that day were the communication failures that made an already-impossible job even harder for these first responders.

The video player is currently playing an ad.



On Sept. 11, 2001, first responders had to pass pieces of paper around Ground Zero to communicate. Matthew McDermott for NY Post

Radios failed. Phone lines jammed.

Agencies from different states couldn't coordinate effectively, resulting in first responders having to pass notes on pieces of paper around Ground Zero and the Pentagon to communicate.

Brave men and women entered the towers without any idea of what they were walking into because there was no way to talk to each other.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology even identified this as a factor in the deaths of 343 firefighters who couldn't evacuate the World Trade Center.

Those failures were not abstract; they were personal.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg asked me to return as police commissioner following 9/11 to respond, rebuild and ensure America and New York were prepared.

I spoke to the families of men and women who never made it home, and I promised them their loved ones' sacrifices would not be in vain.

We owed them more than gratitude. We owed them solutions.

That is why, years later, I was heartened to see Congress take decisive action to make certain this never happens again.

Yet now that effort is in danger of being derailed.



Longest-serving NYPD Commissioner Ray Kelly stands beside replica badges of officers who fell Sept. 11, 2001, at the New York Police Museum in 2010. Chad Rachman/New York Post

The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) finally became reality in 2017, during the first Trump administration.

For the first time in American history, first responders were given a communication network built specifically for them — the men and women who put on a uniform and charge head-on into danger while the rest of us can find safety.

A lot has changed in public safety since I made my first arrest in 1967.

Technology has revolutionized response communication in both everyday service and in times of crisis.

FirstNet ensures that during a hurricane, wildfire, mass shooting or terrorist attack, firefighters and EMTs can coordinate search and rescue, and police can communicate across jurisdictions in real time.

It's what keeps lines open when commercial networks crash under pressure.

It recently helped first responders remain connected during Texas Hill Country's devastating flash floods over the July Fourth weekend and continues to support the recovery efforts today.

Unlike commercial providers, FirstNet gives first responders an always-on priority and preemption.

Their calls and data go through first, no matter what.

It operates on a dedicated spectrum that serves more than 30,000 public-safety agencies and departments across the country.

Over the life of its contract, AT&T will return \$18 billion back into the network to keep it strong.

And *all of it* is done without a dime of taxpayer money.

FirstNet represents responsible governance and a major victory for American strength: a government that empowers private enterprise to solve big problems without expanding the federal budget.

A vision where our heroes have what they need to save lives.



FirstNet helped first responders stay connected during Texas Hill Country's terrible flash floods July Fourth weekend. AFP via Getty Images

But FirstNet's authorization is set to expire in 2027.

If Congress fails to act, we risk turning our backs on the people who rushed into the World Trade Center 24 years ago and those who respond to today's emergencies, armed with courage and a network they can trust.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee just announced a Tuesday subcommittee hearing on the issue.

Reauthorizing FirstNet is supported by the very people who use it: the National Fraternal Order of Police, the International Association of Fire Fighters, the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

These are not partisan voices. These are Americans who know what failure looks like and what success feels like because they've lived both.

Not only that, FirstNet's reauthorization honors the sacrifice of 9/11's heroes and ensures future generations of first responders never face the same communication breakdowns.

It is a chance for Congress, and for President Trump, to double down on a vision that saves lives and strengthens America so that families may feel more secure in their communities.

I can say confidently that FirstNet stands as one of the most consequential and forward-looking investments in public safety this nation has ever seen.

On 9/11, we asked first responders to do the impossible, and they fearlessly put their lives on the line to do so.

Now, we can provide them with the tools to help make good on our vow never to let a tragedy like that happen again.

Let's get it done.

Ray Kelly is the longest-serving NYPD commissioner, leading from 1992 to 1994 and from 2002 to 2013