

Sheriff Michael Adkinson

House Energy and Commerce Committee Questions for the Record, February 2026:

Attachment —Additional Questions for the Record

The Honorable Gus Bilirakis

1. Why did the R.F.P. for FirstNet call for a single provider to build the network?

The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (P.L. 112-96) required the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) to deploy a single, nationwide public safety broadband network (NPSBN) based on a single national architecture through a public-private arrangement. While the statute did not explicitly mandate a single contractor, its structure strongly favored a unified nationwide deployment model.

Before issuing the final request for proposals (RFP), the FirstNet Authority conducted extensive market research, including 13 Requests for Information, two industry days, vendor engagement, state level consultations, and release of a draft RFP. Industry feedback and acquisition analysis indicated that a single-award, objectives-based contract would best achieve the statutory mandate.

Following a thorough examination of the record in response to its market research efforts, the FirstNet Authority determined that a single provider model would:

- Reduce integration and interoperability risks across 56 states and territories
- Simplify accountability under a 25-year public-private partnership
- Enable full valuation and integration of Band 14 spectrum
- Transfer significant financial risk to the private sector
- Leverage existing commercial infrastructure to accelerate deployment
- Promote nationwide consistency in cybersecurity, priority/preemption, pricing, devices, and rural coverage
- Maximize economies of scale for both the contractor and the government through unified deployment and lifecycle management.

A fragmented, multi-award structure was viewed as amplifying technical complexity, administrative burden, and financial risk, particularly given the statutory state opt-out framework and the need for a single interoperable core network.

The single-award model therefore aligned statutory direction, industry input, financial sustainability, and operational requirements into a scalable nationwide solution for public safety. By consolidating responsibility for the core, the radio access network, and long-term evolution of the system, the single-award approach reduced fragmentation, strengthened accountability, and enabled consistent interoperability across all states and territories. This structure also positioned the network to evolve more efficiently over time, with a single entity responsible for technology

upgrades, security posture, and integration of emerging capabilities—an essential factor for a mission-critical system expected to serve diverse agencies for decades.