



International Association of Fire Chiefs

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May 19, 2023

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Chair
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Rodgers and Ranking Member Pallone:

On behalf of the nearly 11,000 members of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), I wanted to thank you for holding a legislative hearing examining the oversight and reauthorization of the National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA). I want to call attention to two pieces of legislation that are being considered: H.R. 3366, introduced by Representative Lizzie Fletcher, would remove the 2027 termination date for the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) and the *Next Generation 9-1-1 Act of 2023* (H.R. 1784), introduced by Representatives Richard Hudson and Anna Eshoo. Both pieces of legislation are vital to members of the public safety community.

The FirstNet Authority was created as a recommendation from the 9/11 Commission to serve as the nation's dedicated public safety broadband communications network. It was created to address the problems in public safety communications that were identified in the 9/11 Commission Report. Currently, the FirstNet Authority has 4.7 million connections in more than 25,000 public safety agencies. Ever since its creation in 2012, the FirstNet Authority has aided in saving countless number of lives. Just this year alone, the FirstNet Authority has helped support over 550 emergency operations assisting in the response to all types of disasters. Congress must move quickly to ensure our first responders stay connected by preventing the FirstNet Authority's termination in 2027.

The *Next Generation 9-1-1 Act of 2023* (H.R. 1784) would allocate \$15 billion dollars to fund the nationwide transition to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1). Our nation's 9-1-1 system is over 50 years old. It urgently needs modernization. As technological innovations have brought improvements to the nation's fire and emergency service, our nation's 9-1-1 service must follow suit. The transition to NG 9-1-1 will allow Emergency Communications Centers (ECC) to receive data, video, text, and pictures, as well as voice communications. This information will give local fire chiefs a better understanding of the incident scene and allow them to make decisions that will save lives and property. H.R. 1784 also will fund cybersecurity improvements to protect the nation's NG 9-1-1 system and training to make sure that the ECC staff can triage information to relay critical information to the first responders on scene.

We urge your swift action on H.R. 3366 and H.R. 1784, *the Next Generation 9-1-1 Act of 2023*. The IAFC thanks the House Energy and Commerce Committee for considering these important pieces of legislation as part of your hearing. We look forward to working with you to meet the communications needs of America's first responders.

Sincerely,

Fire Chief Donna M. Black, EFO, CFO
President and Board Chair

cc: The Honorable Bob Latta, Chair, Communications & Technology Subcommittee
The Honorable Doris Matsui, Ranking Member, Communications & Technology Subcommittee

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