



The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20510

November 19, 2021

Dear Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Leader McCarthy:

The Public Safety Next Generation 9-1-1 Coalition represents the leadership of America’s major fire service, emergency medical services, law enforcement, and public safety communications associations. We formed this coalition to advocate for a once-in-a-generation investment to modernize our nation’s aging 9-1-1 infrastructure to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1).

While the version of the Build Back Better Act that passed the House of Representatives today includes helpful language regarding NG9-1-1, the funding level is woefully inadequate to achieve meaningful nationwide implementation. Congress has otherwise provided significant broadband funding for nearly everything but emergency communications – the most critical of critical infrastructure. This will only widen the gap between the technology that is available to the public at their homes, businesses, schools, and libraries, and today’s antiquated 9-1-1 system.

The Coalition’s funding request has bipartisan support. The amount needed - \$15 billion - is based on the results of a federal study required by Congress and to meet the growing cybersecurity threats facing public safety agencies. Further, this funding would go directly to state and local public safety agencies, foster innovation and competition, and accomplish several key public safety objectives including interoperability and cybersecurity.

Absent adequate federal funding, public safety agencies will be left with overly costly, incomplete, and non-interoperable solutions vulnerable to cyber-attacks. This is an unacceptable outcome that will jeopardize the safety of the public and homeland security and

result in have and have-not communities particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged areas. This resulting inequity will also hinder other noble efforts that Congress has funded to close the digital divide because it will leave these communities without the ability to leverage new broadband capabilities when their lives are at stake and they need to summon emergency response.

We appreciate the efforts of Chairman Frank Pallone and the House Energy and Commerce Committee to include NG9-1-1 in the House bill. They recognize that our aging 9-1-1 infrastructure is overdue for a fundamental upgrade to 21st Century technology. The House-passed language would set us on a path to a more secure, resilient, interoperable, and reliable way of receiving, processing, and responding to requests for emergency assistance. It would also create a public safety advisory board to ensure the federal grant program prioritizes first responder and community needs beyond any other considerations.

But the funding level included in the House-passed bill impedes a nationwide approach and we are gravely concerned that the promise of the legislative language will go unfulfilled. We remain deeply appreciative of those who have worked with us thus far and look to your leadership to achieve adequate funding for this most important public safety service.

We urge Congress to provide full funding of \$15 billion to ensure all Americans benefit from an overdue upgrade to our most critical infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Association of Public Safety Communications Officials – International (APCO)

International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)

International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)

Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA)

Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA)

Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association

National Association of State EMS Officials (NASEMSO)

National Sheriffs' Association