



March 10, 2023

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

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

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

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

On behalf of the Public Safety Next Generation 9-1-1 Coalition, we thank you for your strong and sustained support for federal Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) funding legislation. As you consider the national security implications of spectrum policy at today's hearing entitled "Defending America's Wireless Leadership," we respectfully highlight the corresponding national security imperative of NG9-1-1.

The NG9-1-1 legislation you've developed in collaboration with the public safety community would provide the funding needed to deploy NG9-1-1 in a fully interoperable, comprehensive, secure, innovative, and reliable manner throughout urban and rural areas, ensuring no community is left behind.

As you know, we were grateful that last year the NG9-1-1 legislation was included as part of the Spectrum Innovation Act, a bill that received strong bipartisan and bicameral support that would have directed the revenue from spectrum auctions managed by the Federal Communications Commission to fund NG9-1-1 implementation.

Federal support for NG9-1-1 remains an urgent need. The cyberthreats are outpacing our public safety agencies' defenses. 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.

Achieving NG9-1-1 as soon as possible is a national security imperative, for the following reasons:

1. Enhanced Response to Disasters and National-level Threats

During natural disasters or terrorist attacks, time is of the essence and critical decisions need to be made with the best information available. The current 9-1-1 system is limited to voice calls and basic text messages, preventing citizens from sharing multimedia content and other information that could provide real-time actionable intelligence to emergency responders. Upgrading 9-1-1 systems to allow for the exchange of data, photos, and videos will provide local, state, and national officials with improved situational awareness, resulting in faster and more effective responses and better outcomes for the public and first responders.



2. Protection Against Cyberattacks, Including State-Sponsored Attacks

The current 9-1-1 system already suffers cyberattacks, which disrupt emergency response capabilities and put lives at risk. In most cases, a single 9-1-1 emergency communications center serves numerous responding agencies. Thus, an attack on a 9-1-1 center has a cascading effect on multiple emergency response chains, making it a prime target for cybercriminals and state-sponsored attacks. NG9-1-1 requires a modern cybersecurity architecture that provides end-to-end IP-based intrusion detection and prevention capabilities. Federal funding is needed to implement this upgrade on a national scale and ensure that emergency services are available when they are needed most.

3. Support for National Defense Efforts

The 9-1-1 system is an important part of the nation's defense infrastructure. In the event of a national emergency or attack, the first line of defense is 9-1-1. Multiple civilian and defense agencies and departments would be involved in the response effort. The capabilities of a fully implemented NG9-1-1 network would be vital to improving coordination and ensuring clear, secure, and resilient communications capabilities for national security and defense.

We look forward to continuing to work with you and the committee to finish the job and enact this needed legislation.

Respectfully,

Mel Maier
Spokesman
Public Safety Next Generation 9-1-1 Coalition