



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

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