



Town of Duck Police Department

January 26, 2026

Via Electronic Mail

The Honorable Senator Deb Fischer
Chair, Subcommittee on Telecommunications and Media
United States Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

RE: Support for FirstNet Reauthorization

Dear Senator Fischer:

FirstNet has become essential to the Town of Duck Police Department, which is located on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Our community sits on a narrow peninsula bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Albemarle Sound to the west. The threat of a major hurricane or similar weather event is a fact of life for us.

FirstNet supports frontline response, large scale incidents, disaster coordination, and daily mission critical communications. Its reliability is directly linked to the governance and oversight structure established by Congress in 2012.

I strongly support reauthorization of FirstNet consistent with that original statutory design and do not support changes to its governance or management oversight framework.

Congress deliberately vested authority in an independent FirstNet Authority with substantial public safety representation. This structure ensures that operational realities, responder safety, and mission requirements guide decisions rather than short term administrative or political considerations. Stability and predictability are essential for communications systems relied upon during emergencies.

I am concerned that changes to the original governance model could erode operational independence and introduce uncertainty into long term planning, investment, and system evolution. Mission critical infrastructure requires continuity and insulation from shifting political priorities or pressures.

Existing oversight mechanisms already provide appropriate accountability. Independent annual audits conducted by the Department of Commerce ensure transparency while

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preserving the flexibility necessary for operational excellence. When issues are identified, corrective actions are implemented that strengthen the program.

FirstNet's performance demonstrates that this model works. It is widely regarded as one of the most effective public private partnerships established by Congress and has achieved nationwide impact without additional taxpayer appropriations beyond those originally authorized.

I appreciate the Subcommittee's leadership and urge Congress to preserve the governance principles that have made FirstNet a trusted and indispensable system for the Town of Duck Police Department.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey E. Ackerman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent horizontal line at the beginning.

Jeffrey E. Ackerman
Chief of Police