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Executive Director & CEO: Joseph A. DeLong

July 10, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
Senate Committee on
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
House Committee on
Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
House Committee on
Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20510

RE: First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) – Removing the Sunset Provision

Dear Senator Cruz, Senator Cantwell, Representative Guthrie, and Representative Pallone:

As Connecticut's statewide association representing cities and towns, the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities is writing to express strong support for the reauthorization of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) by removing the sunset provision in the Middle-Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012. Without Congressional action, FirstNet's statutory authority will expire in February 2027, placing a vital public safety asset at risk.

FirstNet was created in direct response to the communications failures experienced during the September 11, 2001 attacks. Since its inception, FirstNet has enabled first responders across the country, including many in Connecticut, to communicate more effectively and reliably. This nationwide, high-speed broadband network has been a critical component in ensuring that local police, fire, EMS, and emergency management personnel can coordinate across jurisdictions during emergencies and major public events.

The network's unique features, including priority access and preemption of non-public safety users, offer significant benefits that traditional commercial networks do not. In Connecticut's urban centers, suburban neighborhoods, and rural communities, FirstNet is being used to support emergency response and day-to-day public safety operations.

Importantly, FirstNet was built through a public-private partnership model that not only ensured operational accountability but also leveraged existing infrastructure to expand coverage in hard-to-reach areas. Connecticut municipalities have benefited from this approach, particularly in regions where broadband coverage had previously been unreliable. Continued expansion in underserved areas supports not only public safety but also community resilience and economic vitality.

Today, over 30,000 public safety agencies nationwide, serving more than 7 million subscribers, depend on FirstNet. This broad adoption underscores both the utility and credibility of the network as a trusted communications platform. Municipal officials and local public safety leaders in Connecticut have seen firsthand the advantages that come from interoperable communications, and we strongly support preserving this system for future generations of first responders.

Reauthorizing FirstNet by removing the 2027 sunset clause will provide municipalities with the certainty needed to continue investing in compatible technologies, training, and applications. It will also preserve the existing governance structure, which ensures ongoing input from public safety professionals through the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) and oversight by the FirstNet Board.

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities respectfully urges Congress to act promptly to lift the sunset provision and permanently authorize FirstNet's continued operation.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to FirstNet service remaining uninterrupted with continued oversight from the federal government with input from the public safety community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe DeLong". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joe" and last name "DeLong" clearly legible.

Joseph DeLong
Executive Director & CEO

cc: Connecticut Congressional Delegation