



STATE OF FLORIDA

DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Kevin Guthrie
Executive Director

To: House Energy and Commerce Committee

January 6, 2026

The Honorable Brett Guthrie, Chair
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chair Guthrie and Ranking Member Pallone:

Florida has one of the most active and complex emergency management environments in the nation. Our state routinely experiences hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, and flooding, and conducts large-scale recovery operations that require clear, reliable communication across agencies and jurisdictions. FirstNet has become a critical element of how we plan for and respond to these challenges.

During recent hurricane seasons, FirstNet has provided a level of operational stability that has strengthened our statewide response. When commercial systems experienced outages or heavy congestion, FirstNet allowed emergency managers, law enforcement, fire rescue, emergency medical teams, and search and rescue units to maintain continuous communication. This ensured that evacuation orders were executed effectively, logistics were coordinated, and life-safety operations continued without interruption.

FirstNet also enhances interoperability. Florida relies on coordinated action among state, county, municipal, and federal partners, as well as nonprofit and private-sector teams active in disaster zones. The ability of these groups to communicate on a consistent, reliable platform has improved situational awareness and reduced delays during periods of high demand.

As Congress considers reauthorization, I encourage the Committee to move forward promptly. Continued support for FirstNet will allow Florida and other states to maintain the communications reliability that first responders depend on during emergencies. The network is an established part of our disaster response framework, and preserving its authority is essential to our mission of protecting lives and supporting affected communities. I appreciate

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the Committee's consideration and look forward to continued collaboration on public safety communications.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "KG".

Kevin Guthrie
Executive Director
Florida Division of Emergency Management

Cc:

Hon. Gus Bilirakis
Hon. Kat Cammack
Hon. Kathy Castor
Hon. Neal Dunn, M.D.
Hon. Laurel Lee
Hon. Darren Soto