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R. E. "CHIP" HAWLEY  
DIRECTOR

December 2, 2025

The Honorable Richard Hudson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2112 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Hudson:

I support Congressional reauthorization of the First Responder Network Authority. As a lifelong member of the public safety community in North Carolina, I have witnessed firsthand FirstNet's commitment to first responders and public safety in providing dedicated, reliable, and interoperable connectivity during times of crisis.

Most recently, during **Hurricane Helene in 2024 and Tropical Storm Chantal in 2025**, torrential rain, wind and flooding devastated communities across our state. The state's response to Hurricane Helene was the largest mobilization of first responders and public safety in the state's history. FirstNet was up to the task, ensuring first responders, law enforcement, and emergency personnel in communities across multiple states could communicate efficiently and effectively.

The FirstNet Response Operations Group (ROG) responded to hundreds of requests from public safety jurisdictions across the state and region to maintain coverage for first responders in storm-impacted areas. In addition, FirstNet is a critical support to 9-1-1 functionality in the state, serving as a backup to our statewide ESiNet system.

FirstNet has also supported our core public safety mission in ensuring robust communications during large public events, mass demonstrations, and missing persons searches. Law enforcement, fire departments, and EMS agencies across the state depend on FirstNet's mission-critical solutions to keep our communities safe.

Reauthorizing the FirstNet Authority's statutory oversight is essential to sustaining and expanding this life-saving network. This technology is built for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. North Carolina's first responders rely on FirstNet, and thanks to the FirstNet Authority, our feedback and input help tailor FirstNet to our specific needs. We are proud to lend our voices to continue developing FirstNet and do not take that responsibility lightly. To that end, we urge Congress to pass legislation reauthorizing FirstNet.

Thank you for your leadership and focus on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R.E. Hawley".

R.E. "Chip" Hawley, Director