



New York State Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials

Barbara J. Van Epps
Executive Director

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July 7, 2025

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

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

RE: First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) Sunset Provision

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

On behalf of the New York State Conference of Mayors (NYCOM), I urge Congress to take timely and bipartisan action to ensure the continued operation of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) beyond its current expiration date in February 2027.

NYCOM represents 577 cities and villages across New York State. Our member communities encompass a vast range of environment from dense urban centers to suburban and rural villages, wilderness regions, maritime areas, and communities along New York's border with Canada. Each of these settings presents distinct public safety challenges, all of which require dependable wireless coverage and guaranteed priority and preemption for emergency communications.

FirstNet has become an indispensable component of public safety infrastructure across New York. Its secure, interoperable broadband network allows fire, police, EMS, and other emergency personnel to communicate reliably during major incidents, natural disasters, and daily operations. The network's unique focus on public safety, its preemption technology, and Federal government oversight, sets it apart from commercial carriers and ensures that first responders can communicate even when commercial networks are congested or unavailable.

In addition to improving emergency coordination, FirstNet has made significant investments in expanding coverage in rural and underserved areas. These efforts directly benefit many of our member municipalities that have historically struggled with connectivity issues.

With 7 million subscriptions supporting nearly 30,000 public safety agencies nationwide, FirstNet has demonstrated its enduring value. Congressional action to secure its future is essential.

I respectfully urge Congress to remove the statutory sunset clause and preserve this vital resource for America's first responders. Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara VanEpps". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized.

Barbara Van Epps
Executive Director
New York State Conference of Mayors (NYCOM)