



President: Hon. Benjamin Boykin II, Westchester County

Executive Director: Stephen J. Acquario, Esq.

July 7, 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) Sunset Provision

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

The New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) strongly urges Congress to eliminate the statutory sunset provision for the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) and ensure its continued operation beyond February 2027.

NYSAC is the voice of county government in New York State, representing all 62 counties. Our members encompass diverse geographies from the rural North Country and Finger Lakes regions to the suburban Hudson Valley and urban centers like New York City. Counties serve as the backbone of public safety infrastructure, directly operating and coordinating essential services, including 911 dispatch centers, emergency medical services, sheriff's departments, and comprehensive disaster response operations. Reliable and prioritized communications are critical to fulfilling these responsibilities and ensuring the safety of the public and first responders alike.

FirstNet has become a critical element of the public safety communications system in New York State. Its dedicated, secure broadband network enables firefighters, law enforcement, emergency medical services providers, and other emergency personnel to maintain reliable communication during both routine operations and large-scale emergencies and natural disasters. Unlike commercial networks, FirstNet is built specifically for public safety, with features like priority access, preemption capabilities, and federal oversight that ensure first responders can stay connected even when commercial systems are overloaded or unavailable.

Committed to counties since 1925

Albany, Allegany, Bronx, Broome, Cattaraugus, Cayuga, Chautauqua, Chemung, Chenango, Clinton, Columbia, Cortland, Delaware, Dutchess, Erie, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Genesee, Greene, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Kings, Lewis, Livingston, Madison, Monroe, Montgomery, Nassau, New York, Niagara, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, Orange, Orleans, Oswego, Otsego, Putnam, Rensselaer, Queens, Richmond, Rockland, St. Lawrence, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Suffolk, Sullivan, Tioga, Tompkins, Ulster, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Westchester, Wyoming, Yates



Beyond enhancing coordination during emergencies, FirstNet has made measurable progress in extending services to rural and hard-to-reach areas. These improvements have reduced longstanding coverage gaps that previously compromised response capabilities in many of our counties.

With nearly 30,000 public safety agencies and over seven million connections nationwide, FirstNet has an essential role in modern public safety operations. Congressional action is now needed to ensure it continues serving those who protect our communities. We respectfully urge Congress to act swiftly to eliminate the statutory sunset provision and preserve this indispensable resource for the nation's first responders.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Stephen J. Acquario
Executive Director

cc: New York Congressional Delegation

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