

12/15/2025

Electronic Mail

The Honorable Brett Guthrie, Chairman
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Hudson, Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Guthrie and Chairman Hudson:

On behalf of the Indiana Sheriffs' Association, and 92 Sheriffs the ISA provides Training and education to, I write to express strong opposition to the FirstNet related provisions in H.R. 1519 that would assign the National Telecommunications and Information Administration authority to "manage" or "oversee" the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority). These provisions would alter the balance Congress created and insert an unnecessary new layer of federal management into the governance of FirstNet.

The Indiana Sheriffs' Association is dedicated to advancing what is best for public safety communications and to supporting the continued success of the FirstNet ecosystem. Sheriffs and deputies across Indiana rely on this mission critical network every day for emergency response, criminal investigations, and the protection of our communities, and they understand firsthand what is required from a reliable and resilient system. Elected sheriffs, who are directly accountable to the citizens they serve, are uniquely positioned to provide informed input on the management and direction of FirstNet and to ensure that the network reflects the real-world needs and priorities of their communities.

Congress established the FirstNet Authority to be directed by an independent Board with strong public safety representation so that first responder needs guide decisions about coverage, investment, and technology. Introducing additional management and oversight authority from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration risks confusion, slower decision making, and weaker input from public safety on the future direction of the program. Public safety practitioners possess the specialized training and operational experience necessary to exercise meaningful oversight, and their role should not be diminished.

As the Indiana Sheriffs' Association Executive Director, I respectfully urge the Committee to remove all references to the FirstNet Authority from H.R. 1519, or at a minimum to strike the provisions that expand the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's management and oversight role. Any consideration of changes to FirstNet governance should occur through a formal reauthorization process that fully engages sheriffs and other public safety leaders who depend on this network.

Thank you for your continued support of America's first responders and for your attention to the importance of maintaining FirstNet as an independent and public safety driven program. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns further with you or your staff.

Respectfully,

Stephen P. Luce (Retired Sheriff)
Indiana Sheriffs' Association
Executive Director

“Building Communities of Trust”