



January 13, 2026

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

Chairman Guthrie:

As we enter a new year, I am writing to encourage you and your colleagues to reauthorize FirstNet.

FirstNet is a trusted collaborator of the Kentucky Derby Festival. Their team has repeatedly worked with us to ensure consistent connectivity and reliable communications during our most active events and seasons. Thunder Over Louisville alone can draw half a million spectators to the Louisville waterfront, making reliable and seamless first-response communication critical. Our miniMarathon & Marathon foot races are more examples of many thousands attending Derby Festival activities over a very large outdoor footprint.

Whether they are providing devices or bringing deployables to help supplement connectivity when crowds descend on Louisville area events, we know that we can rely on FirstNet's expertise, their knowledge of the community, and their consistent presence during our events and activities.

While our focus is on providing creative and unique entertainment and community service opportunities for the people of Greater Louisville, we know that during certain seasons, we are welcoming a statewide, national, and global audience to our city.

And as we work to enhance the positive international recognition, economic and cultural development, and community image of the Greater Louisville area, we rely on the collective efforts and resources of volunteers, small and large businesses, non-profit organizations and governmental entities. Among those critical collaborators is FirstNet.

We are thankful for their service to the community, and we strongly encourage FirstNet reauthorization.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Matthew Gibson
President & CEO
Kentucky Derby Festival