



Virginia State Firefighter's Association

Organized December 2, 1886 "FOR THE PEOPLE'S GOOD" Incorporated February 14, 1897

January 16, 2026

Electronic Mail

senator_fischer@fischer.senate.gov

emily_levinger@fischer.senate.gov

senator_lujan@lujan.senate.gov

carlos_sanchez@lujan.senate.gov

The Honorable Deb Fischer
Chair
Subcommittee on Telecommunications and Media
United States Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

The Honorable Ben Ray Luján
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Telecommunications and Media
United States Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

RE: Support for FirstNet Reauthorization

Dear Chair Fischer and Ranking Member Luján:

The Virginia State Firefighters Association strongly supports the reauthorization of FirstNet consistent with the statutory framework established by Congress in 2012 and does not support changes to the governance or management oversight model that has guided its development. Our collective experience reflects decades of operational, technical, and leadership responsibility.

Congress intentionally structured FirstNet as an independent authority with direct public safety representation. That decision ensured that those who rely on the network during emergencies maintain a central role in shaping its priorities and long-term investments. Altering this structure risks diluting public safety influence and introducing unnecessary uncertainty into a system that depends on continuity and stability.

Public safety organizations remain concerned that deviations from the original governance model could gradually transform FirstNet into a conventional federal program. Such a shift would expose the network to changing political priorities and weaken the predictability required for mission critical communications.

The current statutory framework already provides robust accountability through independent annual audits conducted by the Department of Commerce. These safeguards were deliberately balanced by Congress to ensure



Virginia State Firefighter's Association

Organized December 2, 1886 "FOR THE PEOPLE'S GOOD" Incorporated February 14, 1887

transparency without impairing operational independence or public safety driven decision making. This framework is functioning as intended.

FirstNet has emerged as one of the most successful public private partnerships authorized by Congress, delivering nationwide benefit without additional taxpayer funding beyond that originally authorized. Any proposed changes should be considered only through a formal reauthorization process that meaningfully engages the public safety community and respects Congress's original intent.

We appreciate the Subcommittee's continued leadership and engagement on issues vital to first responders and the communities they serve.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph "Buster" Insley
President
Virginia State Firefighter's Association