

# Sisseton-Wahpeton Law Enforcement

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June 3, 2026

The Honorable John Thune  
United States Senate  
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Thune,

I am writing as the Police Chief of Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Law Enforcement to express my support for the reauthorization of the FirstNet Authority. Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Law Enforcement is a longtime FirstNet user for our emergency communications. During our winter storm response, our officers were able to maintain communication while responding to calls across remote areas of the reservation.

In 2021, a FirstNet tower launched to serve the Tribal community, bringing reliable, dedicated communications to support public safety. Before the FirstNet site launched in 2021, we experienced coverage gaps. Today, we have more than 6 towers on Tribal lands that provide critical coverage in areas that were previously underserved. FirstNet has strengthened our ability to serve our community.

As a Tribal Nation serving a large and rural reservation spanning 1,449 square miles, reliable communications are critical given the distances our officers must cover. The FirstNet network has improved coverage and enabled coordination with EMS, Fish & Wildlife, and emergency management partners during critical incidents. FirstNet has become a vital tool in keeping our officers and our people safe.

Reauthorizing the FirstNet Authority will ensure continued investment and expansion of capabilities that directly impact the safety and resilience of Native communities. The progress we have seen—particularly in areas where commercial networks fall short—demonstrates the importance of maintaining and strengthening this dedicated public-safety resource. Without reauthorization, continued investment in rural and Tribal coverage could stall, putting our responders and community at risk.

I respectfully urge you to support reauthorization so that Tribal Nations and first responders across Indian Country can continue relying on the modern communications infrastructure necessary to protect our officers and safeguard the communities we serve.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and for your continued commitment to public safety.

Sincerely,



Gary Gaikowski

Police Chief

Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Law Enforcement