



Texas Fire Chiefs Association

"SERVING THE LEADERS OF THE TEXAS FIRE SERVICE"

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July 10, 2026

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chair, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Deb Fischer
Chair, Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Telecommunications and Media
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ben Ray Luján
Ranking Member, Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Telecommunications and Media
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Support for Reauthorization of the First Responder Network Authority and Senate Commerce Improvements to the House-Passed Bill

Dear Chair Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, Chair Fischer, and Ranking Member Luján:

The Texas Fire Chiefs Association serves as one voice for over 1100 Fire Chiefs from agencies across Texas cities, towns, and communities. Our members are committed to advancing the protection of life, property, and the environment through leadership, education, and advocacy. On behalf of our members, I write to express our strong support for the reauthorization of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority). The Texas Fire Chiefs Association respectfully urges the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation to promptly advance H.R. 7386, the First Responder Network Authority Reauthorization Act of 2026, to reauthorize the First Responder Network Authority before its current authorization expires.

As leaders of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and its Subcommittee on Telecommunications and Media, you play a central role in ensuring the continuity and advancement of the nation's only dedicated public safety broadband network. The FirstNet Authority was established by Congress in 2012 following communication challenges identified during major national emergencies, including the September 11, 2001, attacks. Congress created the FirstNet Authority within the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to provide first responders with a secure, interoperable, and resilient communications network designed specifically for public safety operations.



Since its inception, the FirstNet Authority has advanced its congressional mandate by supporting a dedicated nationwide broadband network for public safety. The Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network provides prioritized and preemptive communications capabilities to public-safety agencies throughout the country. Its self-sustaining funding model supports continued network investment and modernization without relying on ongoing annual appropriations.

The operational oversight and structure of the FirstNet Authority Board, which includes both public safety and industry leaders, ensure accountability, transparency, and continued innovation. The Authority's success has resulted in a trusted ecosystem of public safety applications, devices, and solutions that enhance situational awareness and coordination during complex incidents.

Reauthorization of the FirstNet Authority before the 2027 deadline is essential to maintaining the operational integrity and modernization of this network. The United States Government Accountability Office has emphasized that failure to reauthorize the Authority would jeopardize the network's sustainability and undermine the confidence of the first responder community.

As the Senate Commerce Committee considers improvements to the House-passed FirstNet reauthorization bill, the public safety community supports the revised language as an important step forward. The revised language restores and preserves the FirstNet Authority's Board-centered operational control, strengthens public safety representation on the Board, requires timely action to fill Board vacancies, and maintains an Executive Director who reports to the Board. Just as important, the revised language creates a 60-day deemed-executed process for Board-approved network reinvestment decisions and task orders, helping ensure that operational improvements are not delayed by unnecessary bureaucracy. These changes retain the 10-year reauthorization framework and add oversight, transparency, and accountability provisions to the House bill, while better protecting the public safety governance model that Congress established for America's first responders.

The public safety community across the great state of Texas has witnessed firsthand the operational value of FirstNet during wildland fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, acts of violence, and other large-scale incidents. For example, during the Kerrville flood operations, FirstNet supported communications among responding personnel from fire, EMS, law enforcement, emergency management, and mutual aid. This type of reliable, prioritized connectivity is essential when agencies must coordinate rapidly across jurisdictional boundaries and changing operational conditions. The ability to maintain dependable, prioritized communications across jurisdictions and disciplines has strengthened emergency response capabilities and ultimately saved lives.

FirstNet has also supported public-safety operations during planned events across Texas, including the FIFA World Cup 2026, major professional and collegiate sporting events, and other large gatherings. Priority and preemption help fire, EMS, law enforcement, emergency management, and 9-1-1 personnel remain connected across agencies, jurisdictions, and operational assignments. These uses demonstrate why continued modernization, Board oversight, and public-safety-driven decision-making remain essential to the network's future.

In support of a unified public safety effort, the Texas Fire Chiefs Association respectfully urges the Committee and Subcommittee to take prompt action to reauthorize the First Responder Network Authority with the revised Senate Commerce language. Doing so will reaffirm Congress's commitment to public safety and ensure that America's first responders continue to have the reliable and interoperable communications network they need to protect the communities they serve.

Respectfully submitted,

David J. (Dave) Parker

Dave Parker
President, Texas Fire Chiefs Association