



NASCIO Statement of Support for Assigning D Block to Public Safety

The National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) supports the reallocation of the D Block to public safety and the establishment of regulatory process and structure to construct a national interoperable mobile wireless broadband network that will improve our nation's homeland security and provide first responders with new voice, video, and data communications technologies that are urgently needed. As a strong advocate for enterprise architecture and open standards, NASCIO supports a uniform foundation for public safety communications. Rather than relying on slices of disparate spectrum for public safety, a nationwide architecture is needed to reduce complexity, promote advanced services and direct future investments toward true interoperability.

On a daily basis, State Chief Information Officers support public safety activities through the provision of statewide communications infrastructure. Our country's local, State, Tribal, and Federal law enforcement, fire, medical, and other emergency professionals must have access to the most modern and reliable wireless broadband technologies to communicate with each other and with federal officials across agencies and geography during emergencies. The ability for public safety to have seamless nationwide roaming capability on a wireless broadband network that is hardened to public safety requirements is achievable and essential for public safety to meet its ever increasing responsibilities.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is planning to address this issue again by the disposition of the D Block via auction. The first attempt by the FCC to auction the spectrum failed miserably. Public safety officials, service providers and infrastructure vendors agree that a more effective method would be to allocate the D Block directly to public safety organizations in order to create a national broadband network that would meet the critical needs of first responders.

One of the top recommendations of the "9-11 Commission Report" was for Congress to "support pending legislation which provides for the expedited and increased assignment of radio spectrum for public safety purposes." We believe Congress must quickly pass legislation to allocate the D block spectrum to public safety, as proposed in bipartisan legislation introduced by Congressman Peter King (R-NY) and Congresswoman Yvette Clarke (D-NY) as **HR5081 – Broadband for First Responders Act of 2010**, and provide an annually recurring and dedicated funding source to build and maintain the nationwide public safety wireless broadband network. Our nation cannot afford to miss this one-time-only opportunity and we call on Congress to support our first responders who put their lives on the line every day to protect and serve their communities.

June 28, 2010

Approved by NASCIO Executive Committee and signed by:

Stephen Fletcher,
NASCIO President