November 16, 2026

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell:

On behalf of the national organizations representing the nation's fire, emergency medical services, law enforcement, public safety communications, emergency managers and the state and local governments that support them, we request that you consider the First Responder Network Authority Reauthorization Act of 2026 (H.R. 7386) during Wednesday's markup.

The federal First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) was created by Congress to address the problems in public safety communications that were demonstrated during the response to the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the 2005 response to Hurricane Katrina, and countless other major incidents that our nation has faced. FirstNet's nationwide public safety broadband network currently provides emergency communications capability for fire, emergency medical service, and law enforcement agencies across the nation.

Unfortunately, the FirstNet Authority is about to expire on February 22, 2027, leaving many local fire, EMS, and law enforcement agencies without the ability to communicate during a major crisis. In fact, the Government Accountability Office stated in a 2022 report that "Without legislative action, the public-safety network will be at risk and first responders could lose service."[1]

[1] Public-Safety Broadband Network: Congressional Action Required to Ensure Network Continuity | U.S. GAO

To save the federal FirstNet Authority, the House of Representatives passed the First Responder Network Authority Reauthorization Act of 2026 (H.R. 7386) on April 20. The bill would:

- Extend the life of the program to September 30, 2037.
- Increase the representation of active public safety officers on the FirstNet Board.
- Reinforce the FirstNet Authority's ability to deploy emergency response capabilities and resources to emergencies and disasters; set strategic priorities for the network; develop an annual budget and outline reinvestment decisions; and manage the device and application ecosystem within the FirstNet network in a timely manner without bureaucratic interference.

In light of the looming crisis caused by the statutory sunset of FirstNet, we ask that you include H.R. 7386 on Wednesday's mark-up. The bill had bipartisan support in the House and would ensure that local fire, EMS, and law enforcement officers can continue to protect the public in times of crisis.

Sincerely,

International Association of Fire Chiefs
Big City Emergency Managers
Congressional Fire Services Institute
International Association of Emergency Managers, U.S. Council
International Association of Fire Fighters
International City/County Management Association
Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association
National Association of Counties
National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
National Association of State Chief Information Officers
National Association of State Foresters
National Association of State Legislatures
National Emergency Management Association
National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
National Fire Protection Association
National League of Cities
National Volunteer Fire Council

cc: The Honorable Deb Fischer, Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, Subcommittee on Telecommunications and Media

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

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