

Resolution to Support a Nationwide Public Safety Wireless Broadband Network

Offered by:
International Association of Fire Chiefs

Whereas, successful incident management is dependent upon command and control; and,

Whereas, communications is the linchpin for effective command and control; and,

Whereas, current emergency services communications are primarily voice and slow speed data on Land Mobile Radio (LMR) systems; and,

Whereas, these LMR systems are the result of 50 years of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) allocating thin slices of spectrum to public safety as a band became available; and,

Whereas, some 55,000 public safety LMR systems are now operating over six or more bands making interoperability difficult and expensive; and,

Whereas, it has been amply determined, in the 9-11 Commission Report, the Katrina Panel Report, and other reports, that public safety needs significantly better communication interoperability and capability to effectively manage incidents and save lives; and,

Whereas, there is an urgent need to develop a new, national architecture for public safety communications; and,

Whereas, public safety has a FCC license for 10 MHz of nationwide broadband spectrum in the upper 700 MHz band which is held by the Public Safety Spectrum Trust; and,

Whereas, the FCC has ordered that all public safety broadband use Long Term Evolution (LTE), a 4th generation (4G) technology; and,

Whereas, public safety has determined that an additional 10 MHz of spectrum is needed in order to effectively build out a nationwide public safety wireless interoperable broadband network using LTE; and,

Whereas, the D Block of spectrum in the upper 700 MHz band is currently up for auction by the FCC; and,

Whereas, the 10 MHz of D Block of spectrum is immediately adjacent to the 10 MHz of public safety broadband spectrum which would make the ideal nationwide public safety broadband network utilizing 4th generation LTE technology; and,

Whereas, this would bring public safety communications in line with 21st Century communications capability on a secure, mission critical network; and,

Whereas, this envisioned public safety broadband network could immeasurably improve fire and EMS communications; and,

Whereas, examples of this for the fire service are: live video to provide instantaneous situational awareness for mass casualty incidents, major hazardous materials spills, and real time situational awareness to incident command as well as elected officials and other decision makers; and,

Whereas, examples of this for the emergency medical services are: digital imaging, portable EKGs, portable ultrasounds, field blood work with a direct link to the hospital's emergency department which would put a virtual physician in the back of the ambulance with the Emergency Medical Technician to expedite the proper life saving treatment which is especially critical in rural areas where transit time to the hospital is longer; and,

Whereas, these types of applications for fire and EMS are only possible with high speed broadband capability; and,

Whereas, it is critically important for the fire service do all in its collective power to improve its nationwide communications capability;

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Congressional Fire Services Institute support legislation to allocate the D Block to public safety and provide federal funding resources for build out as well as operation and maintenance costs to create a nationwide public safety wireless interoperable broadband network.

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