CA — CAP TO CAP — DC

PUBLIC SAFETY

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NEXT GENERATION 911 (NG911)

Business Nexus

Public safety answering points (PSAPs), or 911 dispatch/call centers, are often an underappreciated component of the emergency response system. 911 dispatchers operate multi-line telephone console systems, alerting systems, computer-aided dispatch, and TDD systems for the deaf and hearing - impaired to provide dispatch and communication support services for police, fire, emergency, and related services. Two of the Sacramento Region's key initiatives are to enhance regional interconnectivity by advocating for physical/technical infrastructure to expand broadband access region-wide and develop a ready workforce by training and growing talent in the market. Significant aspects of the Next Generation 911 Act of 2021 seek to advance both initiatives.

Requested Action

Sacramento requests Congress pass legislation to create a federal grant program to assist local governments in implementing Next Generation 911 (NG911) projects that upgrade and enhance the capacity of our Nation's PSAP telecommunication infrastructure:

- Appropriate $470 million in funding for the implementation of NG911 projects.
- Advocate for federal financial assistance made available under a new NG911 grant program to be administered directly to local government agencies in recognition that there are regional variables and considerations in the implementation of NG911 projects. As such, local government agencies are best suited to allocate funding to meet program goals in their regions.

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Brief Background

NG911 modernizes 911 infrastructure to accommodate how most people communicate in today's world – through digital and mobile devices. This modernization upgrades technology from a telephone-based 911 service to a system that allows improved internet protocol (IP)-based communication between the public and emergency first responders. NG911 enables dispatchers to receive 911 calls, text messages, and other digital data from mobile devices and sensors, and provides faster, more reliable caller location information. According to the FCC's Task Force on Optimal Public Safety Answering Point Architecture (TFOPA), NG911 can be defined as a system comprised of hardware, software, data, and operational policies and procedures briefly described below:

- Provide standardized interfaces from call and message services.
- Process all types of emergency calls including non-voice (multi-media) messages.
- Acquire and integrate additional data useful to call routing and handling.
- Deliver the calls/messages and data to the appropriate PSAPs and other appropriate emergency entities.
- Support data and communications needs for coordinated incident response and management.
- Provide a secure environment for emergency communications.

On March 11, 2021, the House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee introduced the Next Generation 911 Act of 2021 as part of the LIFT America Act. The bill acknowledges the 911 system as a critical part of our nation's infrastructure which needs to be rebuilt and modernized to meet the public's needs. Specifically, there are portions of the legislation that address interoperability, cybersecurity, training, and consultation with first responders and other end users of the 911 system.

Appropriations, in the amount of $470 million, for the Next Generation 911 Act were included in the Build Back Better Act. However, since the Build Back Better Act has stalled, proponents for NG911 infrastructure seek a new path through Congress.

Implementing NG911 will have a profound impact on the country's ability to prepare, protect, and respond to emergencies of all sizes by:

<u>Improving Response Times</u>

More than 75% of 911 calls are made from mobile devices, creating challenges for determining the exact location of an emergency, resulting in response time delays. With NG911, PSAPs can pinpoint the location of a call with greater accuracy, ensuring that first responders are deployed faster to an emergency when seconds matter.

Enhancing Safety of the Public and First Responders

NG911 will facilitate the transmission of critical data to first responders including patient data via medical monitoring devices/alarms as well as more accurate scene information via photos, videos, maps, alarm sensor data, and vehicle telematics. Not only does this critical data assist with the deployment of appropriate emergency resources, but it increases situational awareness for first responders and informs mission-critical decision-making. Increased situational awareness and proper deployment of suitable resources greatly enhance first responder safety, improve patient outcomes, and reduce loss of life and property.

Increasing Community Resiliency

PSAPs can become overwhelmed during a natural disaster or other large-scale emergencies, leaving calls unanswered. NG911 enhances redundancy and multi-agency interoperability by enabling re-routing of calls, texts, and data to other PSAPs and expanding communication capabilities between emergency agencies to ensure that no call goes unanswered, and agencies can provide a coordinated response. NG911 enhances the ability of 911 call centers to communicate with each other, with first responders, and with the public, improving overall system efficiency and community resiliency.

Building on Previous Investments

Congress has made previous investments in the creation and roll-out of FirstNet, a nationwide wireless/broadband network dedicated for public safety communications, through which first responders and emergency managers can communicate with each other when public communication channels are overloaded. NG911 will build on this previous investment by increasing the capacity for data-sharing. NG911 and FirstNet complement each other and create a system that enables the exchange of rich data between and among the public, PSAPs, and first responders.

NG911 is the next step in realizing a goal of an emergency communication system that moves public safety technology into the digital age, with an increased capacity to serve the citizens of our nation. As such, NG911 has a broad coalition of support in public safety organizations including Major County Sheriffs of America, Major Cities Chiefs Association, National Sheriffs Association, International Association of Fire Chiefs, and the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association.

Implementation of NG911 across the nation will vary depending on several factors. First, State laws and their ability to incorporate the technology widely varies. Second, utilization in communities will differ based on the built environment. Utilization in metropolitan, urban, suburban, and rural areas will vary as well. Finally, end-users such as law enforcement, fire protection, and EMS providers will prioritize implementation based on their greatest needs. Therefore, the Public Safety team urges Congress to pass this important legislation to create a federal grant program to assist local

governments in implementing NG911 projects and appropriate $470 million to make grants available for direct administration to eligible local government agencies.