

**Before the  
Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, DC 20554**

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Boulder Regional Emergency Telephone	)	PS Docket No. 19-254
Service Authority Petitions	)	
	)	

To: The Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau

**BRETSA COMMENTS**

The Boulder Regional Emergency Telephone Service Authority (“BRETSA”), by its attorney hereby submits its comments in response to the Commission’s September 11, 2019 Public Notice requesting comment on BRETSA’s November 21, 2018 Petition for Reconsideration, or in the Alternative, Petition for Rulemaking and Petition for Rulemaking regarding FirstNet Interoperability.

The raison d’être for FirstNet is the adverse impacts on First Responder communications and emergency response when public safety radio systems provide only limited interoperability on a specific channels; which was brought home to Congress and the public through 9/11.

Statements by FirstNet representatives that “[i]f you are not on a FirstNet subscription, you will not have the same capabilities as the public-safety users on FirstNet—we need to be clear about that,”<sup>1</sup> and suggesting that interoperability with non-FirstNet users may be limited to P-25 systems (continuing the limited interoperability afforded by the P-25 channels which was available on 9/11), suggests that FirstNet may become just another silo. We do not believe

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<sup>1</sup> Donny Jackson, *AT&T exec discusses core-to-core interoperability, Verizon proposal, FirstNet differentiators*, URGENT COMMUNICATIONS (Aug. 17, 2017), <http://urgentcomm.com/public-safety-broadbandfirstnet/att-exec-discusses-core-core-interoperability-verizon-proposal-first>.

Congress intended to award frequencies to FirstNet to enable it to become yet another silo leveraging market share on limited interoperability.

The long-established solution of an agency bringing a laundry basket of radios for participants in an interagency operation, does not permit adequate interagency communication *in an Emergency Response situation*, the very type of situation which spawned the FirstNet concept and led to the provisions of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act (47 U.S.C. § 1401 *et seq.*). Nor will caches of FirstNet devices permit adequate interagency communication in *Emergency Response* situations. It is also clear that there will be areas of the country FirstNet does not and may not ever cover; that FirstNet is not and may never be a *nationwide* public safety broadband network. Interoperability with extant systems and services in areas FirstNet does not cover may nevertheless advance the goals of a *nationwide* public safety network.

The longer the Commission delays (i) clarifying the interoperability requirements of FirstNet and other public safety radio system, (ii) overseeing and actual progress towards full interoperability, and (iii) providing recourse for service or equipment providers who are met with refusals by other providers to implement full interoperability; the more full interoperability will be impeded by market-incentives for providers to leverage market share through proprietary implementations of services, interfaces and features.

The Commission should act expeditiously to grant BRETSA's Petitions, clarifying that (i) ensuring full interoperability is a fundamental responsibility of FirstNet and that interoperability is to be supported at all levels including network, services, applications, and devices, (ii) providers other than FirstNet (*i.e.*, providers of LMR systems or services and CMRS public safety priority services) are responsible for cooperating with FirstNet in the development

of interoperability solutions, and to provide full interoperability with FirstNet, LMR and other CMRS priority public safety services (subject only to technological limitations of a specific service), (iii) roaming and prioritization as applicable to LMR and other CMRS public safety priority services are interoperability requirements, and (iv) the availability of Commission processes for dispute resolution as well as standards for dispute resolution concerning matters of interoperability, roaming and prioritization.

Respectfully submitted,

**BOULDER REGIONAL EMERGENCY  
TELEPHONE SERVICE AUTHORITY**

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