

# NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

*County Government with a Unified Voice!*

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

DATE: March 8, 2016

**RE: PS DOCKET NO. 09-14, SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS ON STATE COLLECTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF 911 FEES AND CHARGES.**

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The New Jersey Association of Counties (NJAC) would like to thank the Commission for the opportunity to offer the following comments in response to the aforementioned report; and, the State of New Jersey's (State) current allocation of funds from the 9-1-1 System and Emergency Response Trust Fund Account (9-1-1 Trust Fund).

As you are aware, the State collects in excess of \$100 million annually in telecommunication user surcharges, itemized on consumer bills as "9-1-1 System/Emergency Response Fees," which subsequently fund the 9-1-1 Trust Fund. During and prior to 2009, counties received grant funding through the 9-1-1 Trust Fund which allowed them to fund 9-1-1 system and equipment upgrades, countywide Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) consolidation and the State mandated County 9-1-1 Coordinator position, with limited liability to local taxpayers.

Although the vast majority of 9-1-1 service requests in the State continue to be handled by county and municipal PSAPs, the State has not allocated any funding whatsoever through the 9-1-1 Trust Fund to local PSAP operators since 2009. Due to this lack of funding, counties operating PSAPs have become self-reliant in improving, maintaining and operating their 9-1-1 systems, despite local residents providing the State a consistent revenue stream intended for such purposes. In fact, in its 6th Annual Report to Congress, the FCC had noted New Jersey diverted 88% of its collected fees to non-eligible expenses under the Federal NET911 Act of 2008. The FCC has noted in the current Report that the State has since increased that diversion to 89%.

NJAC urges the FCC to recognize this critical public safety funding diversion and take action to ensure 9-1-1 Trust Fund revenues are spent solely on eligible expenses. Doing so will help to ensure that local PSAPs have the funding necessary to continue to provide residents with effective, efficient and up to date 9-1-1 systems as intended.

As a non-partisan organization that represents the only true regional form of government in the State, NJAC is committed to advancing innovative programs and initiatives that enhance the level of service provided and save valuable taxpayer dollars.