

Montana State Fire Chiefs Association

Serving those who lead Montana's fire and rescue services

May 23, 2007

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FCC-MAILROOM

The Honorable Kevin J. Martin, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

RE: PS Docket No. 07-8; CC Docket No. 94-102; WT Docket Nos. 03-264, 06-150, 06-169 and 96-86; and EB Docket No. 06-119

Chairman Martin:

The Montana State Fire Chiefs' Association (MSFCA) is committed to ensuring that our state's emergency responders have all of the necessary tools to conduct critical operations. A seamless, wireless, broadband public safety radio communications network with sufficient and priority access for data transmissions is critical to effectively control emergency incidents and protect responder safety in the course of operations.

With the upcoming 700 MHz auction, our nation has a unique opportunity to use a contiguous block of frequencies in the upper 700 MHz band to provide public safety with an advanced nationwide communications network while harnessing the economic benefits of a shared public-private partnership with commercial wireless operators. Most importantly, the public safety professionals would be governing the network that could permanently solve the communications breakdowns that have impeded our ability to carry out our mission when America's communities most need our help.

The MSFCA requests that at least 10MHz of the 700MHz band be made available under rules that require the winner of the auction to have a binding agreement with Public Safety for its participation in the National Public Safety Broadband Network as a prerequisite to receiving their license.

This network must prioritize Public Safety's needs and interests first. To that end, we ask the FCC to license Public Safety's spectrum to a stand alone entity comprised of and governed by Public Safety professionals who will ensure it will be built to the standards of reliability and redundancy that Public Safety requires. It is important that the network be a self-sustaining enterprise and that it can be built out into rural and underserved areas to complete a "universal" system.

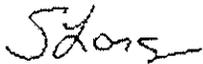
Optimally, the service rules should only permit commercial use of the network at the discretion of the public safety licensee and only if such use does not harm the network or degrade the quality of service to public safety users. Additionally, steps should be taken to ensure that public safety has the right to negotiate a public-private partnership with any commercial entity regardless of the outcome of the commercial auction.

Also critical is access to a satellite overlay to extend the reach of the public safety network to cover areas where a terrestrial build is not economically feasible and to serve as a back-up in times of disasters when existing infrastructures are unavailable.

This system must be kept "evergreen" to stay competitive on the commercial side and to ensure the highest level of technology to public safety users.

We applaud the FCC for taking this important step towards creation of the National Public Safety Broadband Network and request the Commission make certain through establishing services rules that the needs and interests of emergency responders are prioritized. Our nation's first responders and the lives and property of those we protect are worthy of as much.

Respectfully,



Steve Larson
President

cc: The Honorable Michael J. Copps, Commissioner
The Honorable Jonathan S. Adelstein, Commissioner
The Honorable Deborah Tate, Commissioner
The Honorable Robert M. McDowell, Commissioner
Marlene H. Dortch, FCC Secretary ✓