

PS 06-229

To whom it may concern,

It has come to my attention that the FCC is planning on eliminating the 700/800MHz system. Arkansas developed AWIN to provide a single system for first responders to coordinate emergency response within the state. AWIN is a multiple site, trunked communications system based on a digital 700/800 MHz system. AWIN consists of 21,400 subscribers representing 900 public safety agencies. AWIN is the key element in our statewide emergency communications plan, and that first responders have come to rely on AWIN. AWIN provides 99.86 percent reliability for mobile radios across the state, covering 93 percent of the state's population.

The Sebastian County Sheriff's Department dispatches for all first responder agencies in south Sebastian County. This change would affect not only our department but nine other law enforcement agencies, fourteen other fire departments as well as EMS and all first responders. Our own agency and county have invested heavily into this system and would have irreversible effects on our ability to provide emergency response. Further doing away with this system would be a major financial burden that our county cannot afford.

Simply put this will be a disaster for emergency operations for Sebastian County and the state of Arkansas. Since the terror attacks of 9-11 our state has been preparing for state wide communications inoperability as recommended by the federal government. We have achieved this through our investment into AWIN. It is unthinkable that the federal government now wants to take it away.

I respectfully request the waiver be granted until 2024 to assist our state and Sebastian County in keeping our communities safe.

Bill Hollenbeck, Sheriff
Sebastian County, AR