

National Emergency Number Association  
*The Voice of 9-1-1*



July 5, 2006

The Honorable Ted Stevens  
Chairman  
Committee on Commerce, Science  
and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Daniel Inouye  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science  
and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Stevens and Ranking Member Inouye,

I am writing today on behalf of the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) to encourage you to consider openly all proposals that would promote interoperable public safety broadband communications.

NENA has consistently advocated the need to migrate to a next generation 9-1-1 and emergency communications system. The NENA Technical Committee produced a Future Path Plan in 2001 and is currently nearing completion on Next Generation 9-1-1 requirements and design. Earlier this year, NENA released the *Initial Findings and Recommendations* of the 2005 Next Generation E9-1-1 Program. One of the needs for a next generation system of emergency communications identified in the NG Report is to tap “sources of information that are only readily available with a flexible, wide access, high bandwidth network.” These applications, among many others, include telematics automatic crash notification data, transmission of building diagrams to firefighters; digital image and other large file transfers; monitoring of medical or environmental data from scenes of individual trauma or mass disaster; and full-motion video from field to headquarters and from emergency response vehicles to headquarters and other field responders.

The 9-1-1 system of the near and medium future is advancing well beyond 9-1-1 as we know it today. As technology advances, Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) must be part of a broader next generation emergency communications system capable of not only receiving 9-1-1 calls and data communications from all types of devices, but also must have the ability to seamlessly share that information with the broad emergency response community. In a next generation environment, numerous data sources will be readily available and data sharing capabilities among PSAPs and between PSAPs and other agencies and their responders in the field will be possible that do not exist today. All of this will require increased bandwidth for emergency communications.

Congress has recognized the immediate need for spectrum for public safety communications and has allocated 24 MHz of spectrum in the 700 MHz band that will soon be available for interoperable public safety communications. This is vitally important spectrum for public safety, but as has been consistently pointed out by major public safety organizations, there remains a shortfall in spectrum available for broadband communications that will enable the types of data

sharing we envision. In April of this year, Cyren Call Communications, Inc. filed a petition for rulemaking at the FCC proposing to create a nationwide wireless broadband public safety network by allocating an additional 30 MHz of spectrum in the 700 MHz band to public safety. The plan calls for the establishment of a unique Public Safety Broadband Trust whereby public safety will lease spectrum to commercial service providers with strict requirements to build a secure IP-based national broadband network delivering high-speed data and voice services.

NENA appreciates the innovative approach of this plan, in which a national IP-based emergency services network would be established while commercial lessees will still be able to offer services to the general public using excess capacity. NENA also appreciates the fact that Congress has already mandated that this spectrum be auctioned for commercial services and indeed is relying on the proceeds of the auction for a variety of programs, including interoperability and E9-1-1 grant programs.

NENA is currently reviewing the details of the Cyren Call proposal. While we have not specifically endorsed the proposal, we do support the need to increase broadband spectrum for all emergency response agencies for advanced emergency communications. We are not prepared to say whether or not this proposal is the best way to meet that need, but we do see the value of a public discussion of the proposal or any proposal that will ensure increased public safety communications capabilities. The potential benefits to emergency communications are too great not to have the discussion. We echo the suggestions of other public safety organizations that having such a public discussion should not in any way delay the ongoing deployment of interoperable systems in the 24 MHz of spectrum already allocated for public safety.

The 9-1-1 and emergency communications system in America must advance beyond its current limitations and take advantage of new technology. It is critical that Congress and the FCC explore all possible options that will promote advanced interoperable voice and data emergency communications. Thus, NENA encourages you to take a close look at any spectrum proposals that will enhance the public safety of America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Munn", written in a cursive style.

Bill Munn, ENP  
President

cc: Chairman Kevin Martin, Commissioner Michael Copps, Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein,  
Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate, Commissioner Robert McDowell