



**Empower Public Safety,
Together.**

October 24, 2022

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Majority Leader

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Republican Leader

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair, Senate Committee on
Commerce, Science & Transportation

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on
Commerce, Science & Transportation

The Honorable Ben Ray Lujan
Chair, Senate Subcommittee on
Communications, Media and Broadband

The Honorable John Thune
Ranking Member, Senate Subcommittee on
Communications, Media and Broadband

On behalf of the Industry Council for Emergency Response Technologies (iCERT), I want to thank you for your efforts in promoting effective emergency response communications throughout our nation and to urge you to work with your colleagues in Congress to pass NG9-1-1 funding legislation this year. Our nation's emergency response systems are vital to the safety and security of our citizens, our communities, and our country. Federal funding is needed to enable State and local authorities to make the upgrades necessary to ensure these systems are resilient and effective in protecting the public.

Over the past year, iCERT has worked with Congressional staff, the Public Safety NG9-1-1 Coalition, the National Emergency Number Association (NENA), and the National Association of State 9-1-1 Administrators (NASNA) to develop a legislative framework that would promote prompt and effective implementation of NG9-1-1 across our country. The consensus agreement of these national organizations is that significant funding is needed for NG9-1-1 and that Congress must pass legislation that establishes an NG9-1-1 grant program that satisfies several key requirements. It should:

- Be technologically and competitively neutral;
- Utilize commonly accepted standards to promote interoperability;
- Ensure that NG9-1-1 implementations incorporate effective cybersecurity;
- Provide sufficient funding to ensure that all parts of the country are fully implemented;
- Establish a grant process that promotes greater efficiency; and
- Be guided by an advisory board of public safety practitioners and 9-1-1 professionals.

iCERT believes these requirements were largely satisfied by the *Spectrum Innovation Act* (H.R.7624), which passed the House of Representatives on July 27, 2022. The Act, which had strong bipartisan support, combines important spectrum and funding provisions to address two critical national objectives: (1) ensuring the continued growth of advanced wireless services; and (2) ensuring implementation of effective, reliable, and resilient emergency response communications.

iCERT urges the Senate to pass legislation that includes the NG9-1-1 provisions included in H.R.7624, as it was passed by the House. iCERT agrees, however, with the Public Safety NG9-1-1 Coalition that two important additions are needed to ensure the emergency response needs of our country are satisfied. (*See Coalition letter of Aug. 22, 2022*). First, the legislation should provide sufficient funding to ensure that all areas of the country are fully implemented. Based on available cost estimates, iCERT believes that an additional \$15 billion is required to achieve full nationwide deployment of NG9-1-1. Second, funding must start to become available within the next few years. While iCERT understands the challenges associated with funding NG9-1-1 through future spectrum auctions, there are significant risks in further delaying the deployment of NG9-1-1. Consequently, as the Coalition recommends, we urge the Senate to include borrowing authority provisions in the bill that would allow NG9-1-1 grant funding to begin prior to completion of the requisite auctions.

Our nation's emergency response systems are vital to public safety, and our communities deserve the most advanced systems possible. Anything less places the public, our communities, and our nation at risk. iCERT urges you to work with your colleagues in Congress to act promptly to pass legislation that would provide critical funding for NG9-1-1.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Kelemen", written over a light gray rectangular background.

George Kelemen
Executive Director