



Christine O. Gregoire
Governor of Washington
Chair

Dave Heineman
Governor of Nebraska
Vice Chair

Dan Crippen
Executive Director

July 8, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 2051

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Senator McConnell, Speaker Boehner, and Representative Pelosi

On behalf of the nation's governors, we are writing to urge your support in passing S. 911, *the Public Safety Spectrum and Wireless Innovation Act*, before the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. This bipartisan legislation would protect critical public safety communications now and into the future by providing the necessary spectrum, governance and funding to make the nation's first interoperable public safety network a reality.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, the nation watched as thousands lost their lives in the tragic and unprecedented terrorist attacks on the nation's soil. On that day, firefighters, police officers and emergency medical personnel immediately responded to assist the injured and prevent further loss of life. Unfortunately, many of these heroic men and women lost their lives due to the inability to communicate with other first responders on site. Since that time, governors have worked with public safety officials and the federal government to strengthen first responder communications. One important step toward this national goal is the development of a nationwide interoperable *broadband* network for public safety.

As we begin developing the nationwide network, we have a unique opportunity to dramatically transform how first responders communicate and how we deliver life-saving and life-sustaining services to our citizens. Similar to the demand for commercial spectrum, public safety also requires additional spectrum to cost-effectively build and maintain a network. This can best be achieved by reallocating the 10 MHz of D block spectrum to public safety.

Reallocating the D block will meet the critical needs of first responders and allow state and local governments to establish new and innovative partnerships to improve the delivery of government services and provide funding to maintain these systems over time. Combining the D block with the existing public safety broadband spectrum will also help reduce costs by allowing the future consolidation of voice and data systems. On the other hand, the failure to reallocate the D block will preclude public safety entities, and the

state and local governments that support them, the opportunity to pursue these cost reductions and programmatic advantages.

Despite the nation's troubling economic conditions, our law enforcement, firefighters and emergency medical personnel must continue to save lives and protect us from harm. S. 911 recognizes the imperative of providing public safety with the capabilities they require while balancing important financial considerations. Not only does the legislation reallocate the D block to provide sufficient contiguous spectrum, but it pays for this reallocation while also providing funding to develop the network and reduce the deficit by billions of dollars.

We thank you for your support and hope you share our desire to pass this important legislation as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,



Governor Janice K. Brewer
Co-Chair
Special Committee on Homeland Security and
Public Safety



Governor Martin O'Malley
Co-Chair
Special Committee on Homeland Security and
Public Safety