



Statement for the Record
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation
Subcommittee on Communications, Media, and Broadband
Ensuring Solutions to Meet America's Broadband Needs
December 13, 2022

Dear Chairman Lujan, Ranking Member Thune, and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to submit this statement for the record on behalf of the Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA). The MCSA is an association of sheriffs representing the nation's largest counties or parishes with populations of 500,000 people or more. Collectively, we represent more than 130 million Americans.

The MCSA fully believes in the promise of broadband, and we support efforts to expand broadband access to rural, tribal, low-income, and urban areas. Ensuring reliable broadband access in all communities will not only make our communities more prosperous but it also holds the promise of helping public safety personnel, including the men and women who serve in our offices, be more responsive and keep people safer.

That promise will be fulfilled when true Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911) services are available to every person across the nation. To maximize the benefit of federal investment in broadband, it is essential that Congress consider opportunities to expand the public's ability to call for help over those networks. Sheriffs own and operate many of the largest Emergency Communications Centers (ECCs), also known as public safety answering points, around the country. We are responsible for handling incoming 9-1-1 requests for assistance, dispatching emergency response, and providing vital instructions to emergency callers. Most of those centers operate on aging and outdated infrastructure that cannot process the rich data that is available today. We can and must do better.

The Public Safety Next Generation 9-1-1 Coalition, of which the MCSA is a member, has been advocating for a one-time federal investment to help modernize our nation's aging 9-1-1 infrastructure to Next Generation 9-1-1 technology. True NG911 technology will enable ECCs to receive a variety of multimedia and other data from 9-1-1 callers and seamlessly share this information with other ECCs and responding fire, EMS, and law enforcement officials in the field. This will make emergency responses faster, more efficient, and more accurate and make public safety professionals and the communities they serve safer.

As Congress considers solutions to meet America's broadband needs, NG911 access for all people should be a top priority. Thank you for your continued commitment to address these opportunities.

Sincerely,

Megan Noland
Executive Director, Major County Sheriffs of America