



**ASSOCIATION OF
PUBLIC-SAFETY
COMMUNICATIONS
OFFICIALS-
INTERNATIONAL, INC.**

MONTANA CHAPTER

The Honorable Jon Tester
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Tester:

I am the current President of the Montana Chapter of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International, Inc. (APCO). I have worked at the Missoula 9-1-1 Center for over 30 years. I began as a Public Safety Dispatcher answering emergency phone calls and dispatching fire and medical personnel and law enforcement officers in Missoula County and was promoted up into managerial positions through the years. As a public safety professional, voter, and your constituent, I urge you to become a co-sponsor of S. 3756, the Public Safety Spectrum and Wireless Innovation Act of 2010, introduced by Senator John (Jay) Rockefeller, IV (D – WV), Chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee.

The Public Safety Spectrum and Wireless Innovation Act would:

- Establish a framework for the deployment of a nationwide interoperable wireless broadband network for public safety;
- Allocate 10 MHz of spectrum, known as the D Block, to public safety;
- Direct the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to develop technical and operational standards to ensure nationwide interoperability and build-out (including in rural areas);
- Direct the FCC to establish standards that allow public safety officials, when not using the network, to lease capacity on a secondary, but preemptive basis to non-public safety entities, including other governmental users and commercial users; and
- Provide the FCC with incentive auction authority, which allows existing spectrum licensees to voluntarily relinquish their airwaves in exchange for a portion of the proceeds of the commercial auction of their spectrum. The funds from these incentive auctions, in conjunction with funds from the auction of other specified spectrum bands, and funds earned from leasing the public safety network on a secondary basis, will be used to fund the construction and maintenance of the nationwide interoperable wireless broadband public safety network.

S. 3756 builds on the growing support in Congress from Senators Joe Lieberman (I – Conn.) and John McCain (R – Ariz.) who introduced S. 3625 – The First Responders Protection Act of 2010; Representatives Peter King (3rd Dist., NY) and Yvette Clarke (11th Dist., NY), who introduced H.R. 5081 – Broadband for First Responders Act of 2010, which now has more than 68 cosponsors; and Representative Henry Waxman (30th Dist., CA), Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, whose draft language was the catalyst to identifying the necessary funding to build out and maintain a nationwide interoperable public safety broadband network.

Technology and public expectation drive the demands of Public Safety. And as we all know, communication is the key to managing an incident, whether it is a routine law enforcement call or an

incident as large as the disasters on 9/11. I began working as a dispatcher before anyone had cell phones. It was a much different world. Now anyone with a cell phone can call 9-1-1 from their home, their car, their boat, on a remote mountain trail, etc. without having to find a hard-line telephone, which presents a challenge to the 9-1-1 Center in a myriad of ways. Imagine what the demand will be in the future when dispatch centers have equipment that can accept and capture pictures and videos sent from bystanders. Having real-time information directly accessible to the officers in the field enhances responder safety. What technological capabilities (phone, radio, etc.) will we need to meet expectations? How do we accept, process, disseminate and store that information?

The Montana Chapter of APCO held our annual Public Safety Conference in Bozeman in October and attendees signed a petition in support of this legislation. We are still gathering names to add to the petition for APCO International to present to the United States Congress. Public safety officials, including sheriffs, police chiefs, fire chiefs, police officers, state troopers, volunteer fire fighters, and emergency medical service officials in Montana are united in strong support for the allocation of the D Block to public safety and the establishment of a funding program to construct and maintain a nationwide interoperable wireless broadband network that will improve our nation's homeland security and provide first responders with advanced voice, video and data communications technologies that are urgently needed. I will attach copies of the petition pages that are in my possession to demonstrate that support. Please visit www.psafirst.org to learn why this issue is so important to public safety professionals in Montana and across the country.

Thank you for your support of our nation's first responders who put their lives on the line every day to protect and serve our communities. I look forward to receiving a response in support of S. 3756 from your office. You may contact me at any time on my cell phone to discuss this issue.

Sincerely,

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