

Guest Editorial

NG911 Needed to Secure Our Communities and Nation

As the new Congress begins its work in earnest, we look forward to continued progress in funding Next Generation 911 (NG911). Our nation's 911 systems are critical to ensuring the safety and security of our communities, and nationwide implementation of NG911 will ensure these systems have the most advanced communications technologies possible.

This important national goal was nearly achieved in the last Congress, thanks to bipartisan legislative efforts to use future spectrum auctions to fund NG911. Unfortunately, those efforts stalled late last year. The primary obstacle, as reported by the press, was a national security concern related to spectrum used by the U.S. Department of Defense.

To be clear, wireless innovation has always been a significant driver in the development of advanced communications systems to promote national security. Providing a spectrum pipeline for the future is a necessary and critical step in ensuring this innovation continues. However, the greatest near-term benefits to national security come from how spectrum auction proceeds are used. By providing funds for nationwide NG911 deployment, Congress can ensure that all communities have secure and effective emergency communications. The federal government has long recognized that these emergency communications systems are important parts of the nation's national security infrastructure. NG911 is not the only national security objective that would have been advanced with last year's legislation. Under the proposal, a portion of auction proceeds would have also been used to fund the FCC's *Secure and Trusted Communications Reimbursement Program*, otherwise known as "Rip and Replace," which is designed to replace network equipment that is a threat to national security. Absent adequate funding, this important objective can't be met either.

Government use of spectrum is important, and decisions to reallocate spectrum are always challenging. However, our nation has addressed these issues many times before, and national security has never been compromised in the process. There is no reason to think it will be different this time.

This coming week, the 911 community will be in Washington, DC to stress to Congress that the time is NOW to address these critical issues. Nationwide implementation of NG911 should be a national priority, and a federal investment is needed to make it happen. Congress should act promptly to ensure our citizens, our communities, and our nation are safe and secure.

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