

## **RESOLUTION**

### **Expressing a broad set of principles endorsed by the Southern Governors' Association regarding the development of a nationally interoperable public safety communications network.**

Whereas, the Southern Governors' Association recognizes the public safety community as including local, state, and federal police, fire, and emergency medical services personnel, as well as representatives of other critical infrastructure industries including transportation, health care, and utilities;

Whereas, the safety of all of our citizens during a local, regional, statewide or national emergency depends on the ability of the various segments of the public safety community to be able to communicate effectively with each other;

Whereas, the states have all worked diligently with the tools available to achieve public safety communications interoperability for voice at the local and state level;

Whereas, broadband data capabilities would dramatically improve the ability of the public safety community to respond to emergencies, yet the growing demand for these services further adds to the challenge of achieving interoperability;

Whereas, rural areas are particularly challenged with meeting public safety's communications interoperability needs due to a lack of network infrastructure;

Whereas, rural areas should receive equal or the same priority as urban areas for the deployment of network infrastructure for public safety communications;

Whereas, the public safety community does not have sufficient funding to support independently the extensive research and development necessary for continuing innovation on a nationwide interoperable public safety communications network;

Whereas, there remains significant disagreement about whether the public safety community has access to the necessary tools and resources to construct a nationally interoperable public safety communications network, and key among these is adequate spectrum and financial resources;

Whereas, a nationwide interoperable public safety communications network is best achieved through collaboration between the public and private sector, which will allow the public safety community to harness the power of the commercial markets, software, high-speed digital networks, and advances in radio technology;

Whereas, the National Association of Broadcasters reports that 92% of full power television broadcasters have already upgraded their facilities to digital transmission capabilities in preparation for the statutorily required DTV transition on February 17, 2009, indicating that efforts to ensure public safety next generation communications interoperability will not harm this transition;

Whereas, the National Governors Association has embraced “institutionalizing a governance structure that fosters collaborative planning among local, state, and federal government agencies” and “encouraging the development of flexible and open architecture standards” for public safety networks;

**Be it Resolved:**

The Southern Governors’ Association endorses the following principles and courses of action:

A nationally interoperable public safety communications network should meet all of the following requirements and characteristics:

- Offer broadband data services (such as text messaging, photos, diagrams, and streaming video) not currently available in existing public safety land mobile systems;
- Provide nationwide roaming and interoperability for local, state, and federal public safety agencies (police, fire, and EMS) and other emergency services such as transportation, health care, and utilities;
- Provide access to the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), similar to current commercial cellular services;
- Offer push-to-talk, one-to-one, and one-to-many radio capability that would provide a back-up to (but not replace) traditional public safety land mobile mission critical voice systems;
- Provide access to satellite services to provide reliable nationwide communications where terrestrial services either do not exist or are temporarily out of service;
- Cover 99% of the population in each state—regardless of the population density, as well as most of the critical infrastructure, and support urban, suburban, and rural communities;
- Have sufficient spectrum to draw commercial support;
- Be built with next generation technology;
- Be built to public safety ruggedness specifications to ensure reliability under severely adverse conditions; and
- Ensure priority access for public safety.

In order to ensure the development of a system that meets all of the above characteristics, the Southern Governors’ Association recommends that:

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) should:

1. Immediately convene a dialog with state, local and tribal governments, Federal departments and agencies, the public safety community and the

- private sector to determine whether sufficient spectrum is available to ensure, accelerate, and attain interoperable emergency communications nationwide and to make recommendations regarding other obstacles to achieving a national, interoperable public safety communications network. The outcome of this dialog should be submitted in writing to the President, Congress and all governors prior to the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) initiation of proceedings to auction the 60 MHz of spectrum for commercial purposes.
2. Expedite the completion of the baseline assessment for the national emergency communications plan required under the FY 2007 Homeland Security Appropriations legislation so that the plan can take into consideration the upcoming spectrum auction and the potential additional spectrum needs for achieving that plan.
  3. Develop a long-term funding plan for constructing and maintaining the hardware and software aspects of a nationally interoperable next generation public safety communications network.
  4. Ensure that any federal funding provided for the purchase of end-user radio equipment does not restrict state and local governments to any particular type of equipment.

The National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA) should:

1. Prioritize proposals that make strides toward achieving interoperability, and should not be overly prescriptive in distributing funding under the currently pending \$1 billion grant program.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) should:

1. Ensure the creation of a nationwide interoperable public safety network (or network of networks) that meets the characteristics and requirements outlined above.
2. Expand the opportunity for public comment on proposals offered to achieve a nationwide interoperable public safety communications network, and determine the value of each proposal prior to implementing proceedings to auction the 60 MHz of spectrum.
3. Use a national licensing approach for any public safety network that may be developed—regardless of the source of spectrum allocated for this purpose—provided that a governance structure is created to ensure the administrative, access and technical performance aspects of said network are controlled by state and local public safety representatives, and does not preclude appropriate public-private collaboration on the network's overall development.
4. Equally weigh the needs of the public safety community with the needs of commercial operators.
5. Ensure that public safety has sufficient spectrum to provide an economic basis for public/private partnerships.
6. Expedite the processing of Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) applications that propose to expand and enhance wireless networks in rural areas to meet public safety needs.
7. Apply specific public safety requirements to at least 10 MHz of the spectrum currently scheduled to be auctioned.

8. Provide priority designation for utilities and others in the public safety community on existing spectrum below 1 GHz in times of emergency.
9. Review regulations that discourage utilities from building shared systems to support public safety communications.
10. Develop a clear model for funding the development of a nationally interoperable next generation public safety communications network.

The federal, state and local public safety community should:

1. Consider adopting an IP protocol as a first step toward eliminating many of the barriers to voice interoperability associated with proprietary technologies and achieving cost saving economies of scale.
2. Review the P-25 standard for emergency communications and determine whether adhering to this particular standard unnecessarily isolates the public safety community from technological advancements being achieved in the commercial arena.
3. Review regulations that discourage utilities from building shared systems to support public safety communications and recommend any actions that may be required to eliminate those regulations that discourage the development of shared systems by utilities that promote interoperable public safety communications.
4. Review any relevant policies and determine how to modify and/or create the appropriate system access priorities for federal, state and local public safety organizations over any nationally interoperable public safety communications network.

*Time limited (effective May 2007 through Winter Business Meeting 2009)*