

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 12, 2010

0406

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

The inability of first responders to communicate in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 demonstrated the importance of interoperable communications systems in keeping our country safe. Though the 9/11 Commission laid bare the facts in their 2004 report, the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina demonstrated that the problem remains. We write to encourage you to ensure that public safety personnel have the breadth of spectrum they need to meet the challenges they face.

A coalition of organizations representing police chiefs, fire chiefs, sheriffs, and other public safety personnel has spoken out about their concerns. They have proposed a solution. The reallocation of the 700 MHz D Block for public safety use, in combination with the 10 MHz already allocated in the 700 MHz band, could provide the contiguous, broadband spectrum our public safety personnel need for mission-critical communications, from two-way video conferencing to sophisticated, command-and-control operations that make full use of our modern technology.

Getting the most out of this spectrum will be expensive. Congress may need to offer funding support to allow first responders to fully exploit the technology. Private businesses have also expressed their willingness to form network- and infrastructure-sharing partnerships with first responders to help defray some of those costs. With proper regulation, to ensure that public safety communications receive first priority, such arrangements might offer welcome and most helpful cooperation in securing the necessary capital investment.

Implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission is a goal we all share. The reallocation of spectrum we have described offers the potential to finally achieve one of those goals nearly ten years after the attacks that brought the problem to the fore. We hope that the commission will move swiftly to study this means of providing public safety officers with the spectrum they so clearly need.

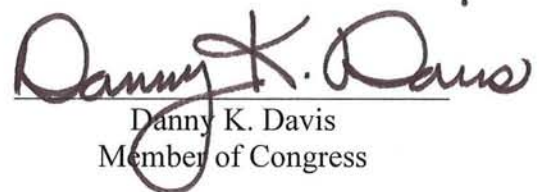
Sincerely,



Charles A. Gonzalez
Member of Congress



Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

FCC Chairman Genachowski
Public Safety in D Block Spectrum
March 12, 2010



Gene Green
Member of Congress



Rush Holt
Member of Congress



Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



Mike Michaud
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Steve Rothman
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