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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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*Public Safety
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June 8, 2015

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Thomas Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Secretary Kerry and Chairman Wheeler,

I am writing to ask for your immediate assistance with an important issue in my home state of New York. In Wyoming County, first responders have been working diligently over the last several years to improve their emergency communications. They secured significant grant funding, which will expire next year, in order to complete this project. However they have run into a substantial bureaucratic hurdle in securing Very High Frequency (VHF) radio frequencies for the county to operate Fire and EMS communications. Wyoming County is located extremely close to the Canadian border, and because of the county's proximity to Canada, they are forced to get approval from the Canadian government for their new radio frequency. Unfortunately, the county has run up against repeated roadblocks and cannot even get the Canadian government to schedule an On-Air-Test (OAT), which must be done in coordination with the FCC. Wyoming has secured a grant for \$1.8 million to pay for new radios and tower equipment, but because Canada has yet to permit access the frequency needed, the project has been severely delayed. The project will put a new radio in every fire/EMS unit in the county and allow complete interoperability with all aspects of public safety in Wyoming County.

It is my understanding that traditionally, the FCC has taken the laboring oar with respect to U.S.-Canadian frequency coordination. However the time sensitive need of Wyoming County and the potential effect that securing an emergency frequency can have is sufficiently important that I believe that the State Department should intervene to help ensure a successful result. I have previously urged the State Department and the FCC to work together to deal with cross-border frequency issues; I still firmly believe that the decisions about coordination between the U.S. and Canada will affect numerous U.S. citizens who live near the border and should be made with the benefit of the State Department's international negotiations expertise.

I would also ask that the FCC continue their work with Wyoming County to ensure that once any remaining issues between the county and Canada are resolved the county is then able to quickly and efficiently acquire and set up their frequency communications.

I hope both the State Department and the Commission will work together to resolve this issue quickly. Thank you for your assistance in this matter and I look forward to continuing our work together to ensure the availability of emergency communications both in New York State and nationwide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles E. Schumer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator