



Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

July 31, 2018

The Honorable Bill Haslam
Chair
Republican Governors Association
1747 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 250
Washington, DC 20006

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Chair
Democratic Governors Association
1225 Eye St. NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Governors Haslam and Inslee,

As leaders of the Republican and Democratic Governors Association, respectively, we write to seek your assistance regarding the troubling practice of 9-1-1 fee diversion.

Every day, hundreds of thousands of Americans call 9-1-1 when the unthinkable occurs. To ensure public confidence in the national emergency number and the communications systems that support it, it is essential for 9-1-1 call centers to have access to the funding required to operate modern technologies and maintain well-trained public safety personnel.

Across the country, this is typically done by adding a line item on individual phone bills for 9-1-1 service. This is a relatively small fee that states and localities charge to support emergency calling services. But too many states are taking these funds and using them for other purposes, like filling budget gaps, purchasing vehicles, or worse. This practice is deceptive. Consumers are being asked to support emergency calling services, but a significant subset of the fees collected are being diverted elsewhere.

According to a recent report released by the Federal Communications Commission, in 2016 five states and territories suctoned almost \$130 million from their 9-1-1 systems. This information is collected annually by the agency, pursuant to the Net 9-1-1 Improvement Act. These figures, however, are not comprehensive. That's because some states and territories have refused to respond to our inquiries regarding fee diversion, including seven in our 2016 report.

While the majority of states and territories do not have an extensive record of diverting 9-1-1 funds, our record reflects that in some locations this is a persistent problem. Beyond the misrepresentation involved, this practice is harmful for public safety. At a time when calling technologies are changing rapidly, diverting these funds makes it difficult for our nation's 9-1-1 call centers to have the resources they need to keep their services up to date.

Recently, the FCC began its examination of 9-1-1 fees collected in 2017. We believe it is imperative for the agency to collect this information from all states and territories and seek your assistance to help ensure that we get the responsive information we need. Moreover, we ask that you consider efforts to halt 9-1-1 fee diversion going forward and encourage those states that have diverted fees in the past to commit to corrective measures.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and support of 9-1-1 and public safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M O'Rielly".

Michael O'Rielly
FCC Commissioner

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jessica Rosenworcel".

Jessica Rosenworcel
FCC Commissioner