



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Over 35 National Organizations Request Full Funding for ENHANCE 911 Act In Letter to Congress

Arlington, VA – The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) joined thirty-seven other national organizations today in a letter sent to all Members of Congress in support of full funding for the ENHANCE 911 Act of 2004. The letter states, “Our goal must be to equip the nation’s 9-1-1 network and call centers with the best technology available, enabling them to provide the service that citizens have come to expect when they dial 9-1-1. Providing funding for the ENHANCE 911 Act is a critical step needed to meet this goal. We ask Congress to give us the opportunity to improve our nation’s 9-1-1 system by funding this vital legislation today.”

The ENHANCE 911 Act authorized the creation of a national 9-1-1 program office and up to \$250 million per year for grants to upgrade enhanced emergency communications services. The Digital Television and Public Safety Act of 2005 provided \$43.5 million for ENHANCE 911 Act grants, but that money will come through a spectrum auction that is to take place "no later than January 28, 2008". Thus, while a significant amount of money will likely be made available for grants in 2008 or 2009, no money has been appropriated to date for PSAP grants.

Justifying the importance of 9-1-1 grants, the letter states that, “while most areas in the United States have basic 9-1-1 service, there are still many communities operating without it. Over 225 counties still do not have enhanced 9-1-1 (E9-1-1) for their landline telephone service. Additionally, only fifty-seven percent of Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), covering just over two-thirds of the population in the United States, have the necessary technology to locate wireless 9-1-1 callers. As new technologies continue to develop, such as voice over IP (VoIP), more challenges for the 9-1-1 system emerge. A primary reason for these limitations is due to a lack of funding for 9-1-1.”

Signatories on the letter include well known national organizations representing public safety groups (9-1-1, law enforcement, fire, EMS, emergency management, public health, transportation), advocacy groups, municipal government organizations and private sector trade associations. NENA President David Jones, ENP, said, “We are thrilled that 9-1-1 is supported by so many organizations. It is a great testament to the broad support of the ENHANCE 911 Act and for providing funding for PSAP grants. I sincerely hope that with such broad support Congress recognizes the importance of funding this legislation.”

A copy of the letter is available at http://www.nena.org/govtaffairs/wash_update.htm.

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About the National Emergency Number Association

NENA is *The Voice of 9-1-1*[™]. Now celebrating its 25th year, NENA was established to promote implementation and awareness of 9-1-1 as North America's universal emergency number. NENA has grown to become the leading professional non-profit organization dedicated solely to 9-1-1 emergency communications issues. NENA serves its more than 7,000 members in 46 chapters across the U.S. and Canada through policy advocacy, establishment of technical and operational standards, certification programs and a broad spectrum of educational offerings. Find out more at www.nena.org.