

# Congress of the United States

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 7, 2005

The Honorable Josh Bolton  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
Eisenhower Executive Office Building  
725 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Bolton:

As you prepare the President's budget for fiscal year 2007, we urge you to fully fund the ENHANCE 9-1-1 Act of 2004. The law, PL 494-108, which President Bush signed last year, establishes a 9-1-1 Implementation and Coordination Office and authorizes \$250 million in matching grants for States, local governments and tribal organizations to improve their 9-1-1 communications systems, hire and train more personnel, and purchase equipment. These upgrades are necessary to allow first responders to know the location of emergency callers when dialing 9-1-1. When implemented, this law will help save lives every day, all over America. The grant program will be administered by the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and I am copying the Secretaries of those two Departments on this letter.

As wireless phones have proliferated, the volume of wireless 9-1-1 calls has increased. Depending on the local area, 25 to 60 percent of all calls to 9-1-1 come from wireless phones, for a total of nearly 140 million nationwide. The wireless industry, following Congressional and FCC mandates, has spent billions of dollars over the last 16 years to upgrade their systems to transmit the location of 9-1-1 callers. Yet most emergency call centers, known as Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), lack the technology needed to use this information to pinpoint callers' location so that help can be sent quickly. This lack of technology has similar ramifications for 9-1-1 calls made using a VoIP service, a technology that is quickly growing and is projected to have up to 16.5 million customers in the United States by 2008.

Approximately 95% of the nation's PSAPs have "enhanced" 9-1-1 (E9-1-1) for wireline callers, which means automated systems can identify the caller's number and address and route the call to a PSAP designated for that location. But less than fifty percent of the country's call centers are capable of determining the precise location of some of the wireless callers dialing 9-1-1, and even fewer can determine the location of a caller who

is calling from a VoIP phone. The primary reason for these limitations is a lack of adequate funding for 9-1-1.

The law President Bush signed is designed to speed E9-1-1 implementation at PSAPs and to improve coordination among all levels of government. The law provides significant seed money to promote best practices and technology innovations. The funding will ensure that PSAPs are ready to deploy vital call-answering equipment for all technologies. States and localities that divert E9-1-1 surcharge fees for other purposes are ineligible for the matching grants. A bi-annual report to Congress on E9-1-1 progress will identify those states as well as other problem areas in our nation's 9-1-1 system.


We feel that there is no better use of public monies than to assist first responders to save lives in every community across America. Full funding of the ENHANCE 911 Act is a necessary step to bring our country's emergency response system into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This advanced emergency response system will also be an important component of national security, as it will help first responders respond more rapidly to a terrorist attack or other national emergency.

We believe the President shares our belief that this program is a critical investment in our nation's safety and security infrastructure. We therefore request that you allocate the full \$250 million authorized by the ENHANCE 911 Act in the budgets of the Commerce Department and the Transportation Department for the President's budget that will be submitted in September. We will follow up with you again later this year.

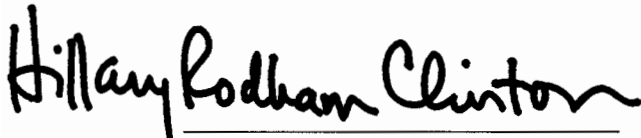
Sincerely,




Conrad R. Burns



John Shimkus



Hillary Rodham Clinton



Anna G. Eshoo

cc: The Honorable Carlos Gutierrez, Secretary of Commerce  
The Honorable Norman Mineta, Secretary of Transportation