

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904

May 23, 2014

The Honorable Lawrence E. Strickling
Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information and Administrator
National Telecommunications & Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Assistant Secretary Strickling:

We are writing to request an update on the National Telecommunications & Information Administration's plans to support state efforts to migrate to Next Generation 9-1-1.

The importance of Next Generation 9-1-1 was underscored by the murder of Timothy Davison, 28, of Poland, Maine, in the early morning hours of January 4, 2014. Mr. Davison, who was returning to Maine after visiting family in Florida, called 911 from his car to report that he was being aggressively pursued and fired at by an unknown motorist while he was driving along Interstate 81 near the border of Maryland and Pennsylvania. Tragically, Mr. Davison was fatally shot as he sat defenseless in his vehicle after the assailant forced him off the highway.

It is deeply concerning that Mr. Davison's initial call to 911, received by a Maryland dispatcher, was reportedly dropped as he crossed state lines. A subsequent call placed by Mr. Davison was rerouted to a Pennsylvania dispatcher. This critical lapse in communication may have denied Mr. Davison life-saving instruction and prevented him from relaying information that could have led to the perpetrator's identification, which to this day remains an unsolved mystery.

As you know, the present 911 system relies on analog infrastructure that struggles to integrate newer, digital technologies. The failure to modernize our 911 system has left it vulnerable to dropped and misdirected calls, which can sometimes lead to tragic consequences. Modern technologies, such as those which comprise Next Generation 911, would enhance emergency communications by facilitating interoperability and improving connections between 911 call centers. Recognizing this, Congress has passed several major bills to modernize the handling of 911 emergency calls. The most recent of these, the NET 911 Improvement Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-283), gave the task of designing a National Plan for migrating to an IP-enabled emergency network to the E-911 Implementation Coordination Office (ICO), which was jointly administered by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The Spectrum Act directs the ICO, in consultation with National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Department of Homeland Security, to report on costs for requirements and specifications of Next Generation 9-1-1 services. Given the importance of modernizing our 911 system, we would like to know the status of the NTIA's efforts to complete this critical report.

Sincerely,

Susan M Collins *Angus King*

Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

Bob Casey, Jr.

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator