



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON DC

April 3, 2018

Mike O'Rielly
Commissioner

The Honorable Gina Raimondo
Governor of Rhode Island
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Governor Raimondo:

Each day, hundreds of thousands of Americans rely on a fully functional, responsive 9-1-1 emergency communications system to seek help in times of need – often in the worst moments of their lives. For these systems to serve the American people, sufficient funding must be available. As you know, Rhode Island has been a self-admitted diverter of the 9-1-1 fees it collects to fund its public safety call center since the Federal Communications Commission began requesting information from states in 2009. Ending such practices is more than necessary.

I appreciate your staff reaching out to meet with me last week during my tour of Rhode Island's Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). Touring this PSAP was important to me after recent investigative reporting by Providence's WJAR revealed serious problems facing this call center due to underfunding. According to the report, this has led to longer wait times, delayed emergency responses, worker fatigue and lower morale, and an inability to invest in new systems, just to name a few.

While in Rhode Island, I discussed with your staff how this diversion came about and the impact it has had on your 9-1-1 services. During this discussion, I was heartened to learn that you were supportive of changing Rhode Island state law to prevent fee diversion going forward. With your support, coupled with endorsements I have seen from the Democrat House Speaker, as well as Republican State Representative Bob Lancia, there appears to be a unique opportunity to end the diversion of 9-1-1 fees in Rhode Island.

Accordingly, I seek to understand the next steps that you plan to take to change the 9-1-1 fee diversion practices of Rhode Island. Specifically, I am interested to know if you plan to make a formal legislative recommendation on this matter to the State General Assembly and if the creation of a new dedicated 9-1-1 fund will be contained within a supplemental budget submission or await next year's budget preparation. Further, it is important to know whether any excess 9-1-1 fees that currently go to the State's General Fund will be reduced to the appropriate level or reserved to modernize the state's 9-1-1 system. Respectfully, I would appreciate responses to these areas of inquiry and any other information you deem helpful at your earliest convenience.

Given its importance and for the reasons stated above, I look forward to working with you to ending 9-1-1 fee diversion in Rhode Island once and for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "M. Rielly".

Michael O'Rielly