



Consolidated Communications Network of Colorado, Inc.

Consolidated Communications Network of
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**Prepared Statement regarding H.B. 12-1224
 House Transportation Committee - February 22, 2012**

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and Honorable committee members.

I am here today as the current President of the Consolidated Communications Network of Colorado, better known as CCNC. CCNC is the organization that is currently tasked with the management of the statewide digital trunked radio system in conjunction with all of its members and infrastructure partners. The majority of the CCNC Executive Board supports the creation of a statutorily recognized Authority tasked with developing an enhanced governance model and developing sustainability options for the statewide digital trunked radio system.

If I may I would like to provide a brief history of CCNC. The first version of CCNC began in 1998 when three metropolitan counties, one large metropolitan city and a division of the State of Colorado sat down and agreed to work together to form an interoperable standards-based communications system. Between 1998 and 2002, several other local governments continued to build and expand the system, again in a cooperative effort to expand public safety communications. Then in 2002, CCNC was formed as a nonprofit organization with five counties, one organization representing county and local governments and a division of the State contributing significant infrastructure to expand

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the system. Over the past ten years, the system has grown through the combined efforts of entities from across the State to a system with 204 radio sites, over 60,000 subscriber units or radios and over 1,000 agencies that spans all levels of government, all disciplines of public safety, school districts and hospitals that use the system for their daily operations or use the system for interoperations with their neighboring communities.

This Authority is seen as the next step in the evolution of the statewide DTR in order to codify our system that has been successfully implemented and still experiences continuous growth. This Authority would be a means to that goal that an all volunteer, nonprofit organization cannot totally achieve on its own. With the formation of the Authority, and its Board having the accountability to the Joint Budget Committee, it is hoped that a much clearer picture of where the system is at today may be obtained and presented. Also, by giving the Authority the ability to look at various avenues of sustainability and organizational structure, it will, in the long run, be able to keep a vital piece of statewide communications in operation. We would ask that careful consideration be given to the needs of all of the user agencies and the significant contributions from counties, local government, regional communications consortiums and the State that have come together to build out the system.

Three key issues that this Authority will assist with are; 1) aging infrastructure, 2) system upgrade paths, and 3) overall sustainability.

Aging infrastructure or what is commonly referred to as the backbone consists of various links across the State. Many of these are microwave paths that crisscross the State, owned by various local entities as well as the State, thus linking our members facilitating the communications network. These pieces of the communication puzzle, which are the “backbone” of the system, are aging and will soon be in need of replacement. Replacement is also needed as technology changes and advances are made. Replacement parts begin to become scarce and items need replaced in order to keep pace.

Upgrade paths or an overall plan to upgrade software and hardware on the system is seen as a key point in the creation of the Authority. As a recognized political entity, with backing from the user community, a more defined timeline associated with a cost structure would be able to be obtained. As of now, the system is several software versions behind and facing lack of future support. As a nonprofit, CCNC just does not have the political might to plan for future upgrades. Most of the past upgrades to the system have been borne not by CCNC, but by our members and the major contributing partners.

I would like to address the issue of overall sustainability. The future of operable and interoperable communications across the State needs a sustainable funding mechanism. Relying on the good will of partner agencies, proceeds from donations and sponsorships cannot sustain a statewide system. Sustainability options would need to be one of the tasks of the Authority to design and recommend. The State, the regions, the counties and local government have built from the grassroots level an interoperable communications