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**Nine Former FCC Chairs Urge Congress to Fund Next Generation 9-1-1**

ALEXANDRIA, Va., (Feb. 21, 2024) — A bipartisan group of nine former chairs of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is calling on Congress to make the nationwide transition to Next Generation 9-1-1 an “urgent, top priority.”

In a [letter](#) to the U.S. House and Senate leaders, the former top telecommunications regulatory officials say, “America’s 9-1-1 system – the backbone of our nation’s emergency response infrastructure – desperately needs a technology upgrade. ... Transitioning from legacy 9-1-1 to NG9-1-1 would be the public safety equivalent of moving from dial-up Internet access to optical fiber,” with “enhanced reliability, cybersecurity, accessibility, and interoperability.”

However, “States, tribal communities, and local 9-1-1 authorities do not have the estimated \$15 billion needed to fully implement NG9-1-1,” they write. “In fact, they face a double-bind as they must spend scarce funds maintaining legacy 9-1-1 systems until NG9-1-1 is fully deployed and operational.”

The group suggests several sources of funding that would not impact the federal budget, including federal spectrum auctions revenues or repurposing appropriated but unspent COVID-era funding.

“Today, there is a national consensus that every American deserves access to modern communications technologies, such as broadband,” the group writes, and “nationwide NG9-1-1 is the public safety linchpin” of this commitment.

The letter is signed by Richard E. Wiley (FCC chair from 1974-1977), Dennis R. Patrick (1987-1999), Reed E. Hundt (1993-1997), William E. Kennard (1997-2001), Michael J. Copps (2009), Julius Genachowski (2009-2013), Mignon Clyburn (2013), Tom Wheeler (2013-2017), and Ajit Pai (2017-2021).

On behalf of America’s 9-1-1 professionals, [NENA: The 9-1-1 Association](#) welcomed the letter. “We thank this distinguished, bipartisan group of leaders for stepping up and speaking out,” said NENA CEO Brian Fontes. “Their joint initiative underscores the fact that enhancing public safety is not a partisan issue. Likewise, Congress should come together now and help speed the modernization of this essential public service.”

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**About NENA: The 9-1-1 Association**

*The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) empowers its members and the greater 9-1-1 community to provide the best possible emergency response through standards development, training, thought leadership, outreach, and advocacy. Our vision is a public made safer by 9-1-1 services delivered by highly-trained emergency-communications professionals and powered by the latest technologies. Learn more at [nena.org](http://nena.org).*