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NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSN

MEMBER OF  
VIRGINIA STATE SHERIFFS' ASSN



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**ORIGINAL**

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FCC - MAILROOM

November 4, 2003

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Support for the Consensus Plan for 800 MHz Realignment  
Ex Parte, WT Docket No. 02-55

Dear Ms Dortch:

Hanover County, Virginia operates an 800 MHz trunked radio system providing critical public safety communications for police, fire and emergency medical personnel, as well as some other county agencies. We are extremely interested in the above-referenced proceeding for public safety and request that our views be considered.

First responders in Virginia and across the nation are increasingly at risk because their public safety radio communications are vulnerable to interference from cellular phones. As cellular usage increases, the risk of garbled or blocked police, fire and other public safety communications increases. First responders also urgently need more 800 MHz spectrum to have 'interoperable' communications capabilities among police and firefighters in our neighboring jurisdictions. Fortunately, a solution is available.

The Federal Communications Commission has before it a "Consensus Plan" that would address cellular/ public safety radio interference problems and provide more of the spectrum that first responders urgently need for radio communications. Hanover County Sheriff's Office supports the Consensus Plan along with:

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An Accredited Law Enforcement Agency

Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials-International, Inc.  
International Association of Fire Chiefs, Inc.  
International Municipal Signal Association  
International Association of Chiefs of Police  
Major Cities Chiefs Association  
Major County Sheriffs' Association  
National Sheriffs' Association.

We urge the FCC to expeditiously adopt the Consensus Plan in its public safety spectrum rulemaking, WT Docket No. 02-55.

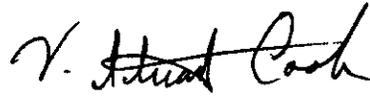
The Consensus Plan offers the only real, near-term solution to existing public safety radio problems. It provides a comprehensive solution that addresses interference to public safety systems, allocates additional spectrum for public safety needs, provides private funding to compensate licensees that may need to relocate to new channels as the result of the Plan, and ensures that all affected licensees receive equivalent replacement spectrum as part of the spectrum swaps called for by the Consensus Plan.

Other proposals that have been made to the FCC fall short and must be rejected. The UTC/ cellular 'plan' ignores the problems faced by public safety communicators and suggests that case-by-case, after-the-fact solutions be found once interference manifests itself. Responding only to the after-the-fact problems affecting time-critical public safety services is not acceptable, since a single interference can jeopardize the lives of emergency personnel and the citizens they serve.

Section 1 of the Communications Act of 1934, provides that the FCC is to "promote safety of life and property through the use of wire and radio communication." The Consensus Plan would greatly advance this vital objective. It has been over sixteen months since the FCC began its public safety spectrum proceeding and over one year since the Consensus Plan was submitted. Supporters of the Consensus Plan have recently addressed the remaining implementation details associated with the Plan. There is no reason for the FCC to postpone action any further.

We urge the FCC to expeditiously resolve the issues facing the public safety community and adopt in full the terms of the Consensus Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "V. Stuart Cook". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "V".

Colonel V. Stuart Cook  
Sheriff

VSC/lzj