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No. 17-131

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Governor Walker Approves Buildout Plan for First Responder Network

First Responder Network Authority opt-in will help first responders save lives

August 30, 2017 ANCHORAGE — Governor Bill Walker last Thursday signed a letter of intent to allow the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) to proceed with the deployment of the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network in Alaska. The plan will bring a secure wireless broadband network to the public safety community that will help Alaska’s first responders save lives.

“Opting in to FirstNet is an important step to ensure that Alaska’s first responders can communicate when seconds can mean the difference between life and death,” said Governor Bill Walker. “Putting this technology in the hands of our public safety personnel brings us closer to building a safer Alaska.”

FirstNet gives fire, police, EMS, and other public safety personnel priority network access during a crisis. The network will connect them to critical information quickly and securely, and expedite the response to emergencies, natural disasters, and day-to-day operations.

Alaska incurs no risk or cost for the network, which will expand coverage for rural Alaska. By growing network access for first responders, a reliable, high speed connection will be available in areas currently with little to no connectivity.

“Governor Walker’s decision to join FirstNet strengthens emergency communications across Alaska,” said FirstNet CEO Mike Poth. “FirstNet will deliver a state-of-the-art network to address the challenges of communicating where first responders need it the most, like mountainous, coastal, rural and tribal areas--every day, and in every emergency.”

Alaska’s officials and public safety community have provided extensive input on the decision, meeting with FirstNet over 20 times since 2014 to ensure the network addresses the state’s unique challenges. The state will continue to work with stakeholders to provide feedback in order to ensure a viable and effective partnership.

Attached: Letter of Intent from Gov. Walker to allow FirstNet to proceed with AK broadband network

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