



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

DEC - 8 2016

OFFICE OF  
ENFORCEMENT AND  
COMPLIANCE ASSURANCE

Genevieve Walker  
Director of Environmental Compliance  
First Responder Network Authority  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
12201 Sunrise Valley Dr. M/S 243  
Reston, VA 20192

Subject: Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network for the Southern United States, CEQ # 20160234

Dear Ms. Walker:

In accordance with our responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has completed its review of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet), draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS). The draft PEIS analyzes the impacts of the construction and operation of a nationwide public safety broadband network (NPSBN) in the western United States.

The NPSBN will address a critical national infrastructure need for a nationwide network to allow law enforcement personnel, fire fighters, emergency medical service professionals, and other public safety entities to communicate across agencies and jurisdictions. The draft PEIS is the last in a series that covers five geographic regions across the U.S. This draft PEIS covers the southern United States and includes the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas.

The draft PEIS analyzed three alternatives: 1) Preferred Alternative, 2) Deployable Technologies Only Alternative, and 3) No Action Alternative. FirstNet selected the Preferred Alternative. Under the Preferred Alternative, FirstNet would construct a nationwide broadband Long Term Evolution (LTE) network using a combination of wired, wireless, deployable, and satellite technologies. This may include, but is not limited to: colocation of network equipment and new infrastructure.

Based on our review, EPA rates the Preferred Alternative an **LO**. The “LO” rating signifies that the draft PEIS review did not identify any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the Preferred Alternative.

Please refer to our previous letters dated November 15, 2016 and October 11, 2016 in which we offered comments relevant for inclusion in this PEIS.

The EPA Rating System Criteria is located at  
<http://www.epa.gov/compliance/nepa/comments/ratings.html>.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the draft PEIS and look forward to reviewing the final PEIS. The staff contact for the review is Arthur Totten and he can be reached at (202) 564-7164.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Tomiak', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert Tomiak  
Director  
Office of Federal Activities