

FIRSTNET SUPPORT LETTER

Draft Letter

Honorable Bill Keating
315 Cannon HOB
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Keating,

We are writing you as first responders in the 9th District on the Island of Martha's Vineyard in support of the provision within the Middles Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 establishing a nationwide interoperable broadband network that will help us in our mission of responding to emergency situations as they arise in our community.

We understand that the architecture to deploy such a system is entitled First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet), which will improve our wireless public safety communications requirements.

Unfortunately, such a system requires fiber optic cable infrastructure to be effective, and the Island of Martha's Vineyard does not have such connectivity at present with the exception of a few fiber lines the local Electric Utility (NSTAR) has attached to their electric cable feeding the Island, which are not available for public safety use. However, we do understand that a project known as Open Cape has established an infrastructure in Southeastern Massachusetts which is about to become operable, but leaves Martha's Vineyard reliant on microwave connectivity to that infrastructure which is not anywhere as reliable or as capable. We understand that Open Cape is offering to be the provider for connectivity to FirstNet.

There is an opportunity to help our Island Community: We understand that COMCAST is now negotiating with NSTAR to bring to the Island a 96 fiber cable using the NSTAR easement and that NSTAR is in return being granted exclusive use of 24 of those fibers. Neither NSTAR or COMCAST are planning to grant exclusive use of any fiber to help the Island connect to FirstNet. Discussion with Open Cape indicates that they would require 2 fibers to the Island to provide reliable connectivity to their infrastructure.

We are asking for your timely intervention to ensure that in the arrangement NSTAR is developing with COMCAST, that two fibers be made available for FirstNet connectivity to the Island., through Open Cape.

Sincerely,