

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927  
Minority (202) 225-3641

September 26, 2017

Fred Kornberg  
CEO and President  
Comtech Telecommunications Corp.  
68 South Service Road, Suite 230  
Melville, New York 11747

Dear Mr. Kornberg:

We write to request information about the concerning reports that Comtech's recent outages have prevented people from connecting with 911 emergency operators<sup>1</sup>. When someone calls 911, every second counts and any delay in connecting could be devastating. Furthermore, the recent natural disasters ravaging significant parts of our country show just how critical it is for communities to have 911 systems they can rely on no matter what.

Effective 911 services can be the difference between life and death, and that is why we are so troubled by reports detailing 911 system outages in areas serviced by Comtech throughout the country. While 911 services are provided by local governments, the system has evolved so that most calls from wireless phones—the only phones for most Americans<sup>2</sup>—are routed through only two national vendors, including Comtech. Your Annual Report states that Comtech has a

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<sup>1</sup> Jeff Rossen and Jovanna Billington, *911 outages imperil public safety in Cincinnati and elsewhere*, Today (Sept. 20, 2017) (<https://www.today.com/health/911-outages-imperil-public-safety-cincinnati-elsewhere-t116531>); Danielle Ferguson, *Vendor hired to upgrade 911 system too slow, board withholds payment*, Argus Leader (Feb. 9, 2017) (<http://www.argusleader.com/story/news/2017/02/09/vendor-hired-upgrade-911-system-too-slow-board-withholds-payment/97715316/>); Jesse Leavenworth, *New 911 System For East Hartford, Manchester A Better Fit For Cellphones*, Hartford Courant (Sept. 19, 2017) (<http://www.courant.com/community/manchester/hc-east-hartford-new-911-0920-20170919-story.html>).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, *Wireless Substitution: Early Release of Estimates From the National Health Interview Survey, July-December 2016* (May 2017) (<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhis/earlyrelease/wireless201705.pdf>).

“significant market share in the routing of U.S. wireless 911 calls,” and that Comtech is “one of two companies” that can meet the Federal Communications Commission’s requirements for Enhanced 911 services.<sup>3</sup> These are the services that provide public safety officials with location information for wireless and VoIP network operators. Comtech’s Next Generation 911 products “are utilized by literally millions of people in more than 30 states.”<sup>4</sup>

Comtech’s national reach has meant that breakdowns within its systems can be felt in communities across the country. Recent reports detailed instances where consumers using cell phones were sometimes completely unable to reach 911 operators.<sup>5</sup> These problems have reportedly led to officials in communities in Ohio, Connecticut, and South Dakota suspending or even discontinuing services with Comtech.<sup>6</sup> According to one recent press account, the city of Cincinnati has experienced 10 outages since June of 2016, including one lasting three hours and 30 minutes, eventually leading city officials to discontinue services with Comtech.<sup>7</sup>

We would like to better understand what problems in Comtech’s systems led to the reported 911 outages. We also seek information about how Comtech complies with federal, state, and local regulations that ensure reliability in 911 systems. We request that Comtech provide a briefing to Committee staff by October 17, 2017.

Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated, and we look forward to receiving a response. If you have any questions, please contact Julie Babayan or Jerry Leverich of the Democratic Committee staff at (202) 225-3641.

Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Ranking Member



Diana DeGette  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight  
and Investigations

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<sup>3</sup> Comtech Telecommunications Corp., Annual Report (Form 10-K) (Oct. 6, 2016) (<https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/23197/000002319716000074/cmtl0731201610k.htm>).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> *See* note 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> Jeff Rossen and Jovanna Billington, *911 outages imperil public safety in Cincinnati and elsewhere*, Today (Sept. 20, 2017) (<https://www.today.com/health/911-outages-imperil-public-safety-cincinnati-elsewhere-t116531>).

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Mike Doyle  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Communications  
and Technology

Cc: The Honorable Ajit V. Pai, Chairman, FCC  
The Honorable Mignon Clyburn, Commissioner, FCC  
The Honorable Michael O'Rielly, Commissioner, FCC  
The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel, Commissioner, FCC  
The Honorable Brendan Carr, Commissioner, FCC