

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery**  
**of**  
**Member Doris Matsui**

*Markup of 2 Bills, Full Committee*

**March 25, 2026**

Thank you, Chairman Guthrie.

Today's markup reauthorizing FirstNet is an important step forward for public safety. I'm happy we've reached this point through a strong bipartisan process. FirstNet has made a real difference for first responders across the country—we see the impact clearly in my district.

From downtown Sacramento to the California Delta, our firefighters, EMTs, and law enforcement are responding to wildfires that move fast, floods that threaten communities, and disasters that can knock out local infrastructure in a matter of minutes. They need priority service, strong coverage, and a network that performs when conditions are at their worst.

When those calls come in, when evacuations are underway, and when crews are coordinating across agencies, a reliable connection is more than a convenience. It's essential to keeping people safe. FirstNet's mission remains just as important today as when Congress first created it, and I want to recognize the bipartisan work that has gone into improving this bill. We're protecting what works and fixing what doesn't.

We're ensuring FirstNet is working as intended and delivering real value for public safety. That means strengthening oversight and accountability. Congress and the public deserve a clear picture of how funds are being spent, whether commitments are being met, and whether public safety goals are truly being achieved.

It also means making sure the benefits of FirstNet reach all communities, including the rural and hard-to-serve areas that too often get left behind. That's why I'm glad this bill places FirstNet under NTIA's direct control, while preserving flexibility for the FirstNet Authority to set strategic priorities and deploy emergency responses. These guardrails improve accountability while respecting the expertise of our public safety community. And importantly, now that Congress finally has access to the FirstNet contract, we're better positioned to provide the rigorous oversight this program deserves.

That access helps Congress verify investments, track performance, and keep FirstNet on the right path. That's how we make sure this program remains worthy of the trust that first responders and the public have placed in it. I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their work on this bill, and I look forward to working together as we move it forward.

With that, I yield back.