



METROPOLITAN  
EMERGENCY SERVICES BOARD

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SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA  
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March 2, 2023

Representative Kelly Moller  
509 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for HF 1075 – Statewide Public Safety Radio Communication System Equipment Grant Program Established, and Money Appropriated

Dear Chair Moller:

The Metropolitan Emergency Services Board writes in support of HF 1075, which would establish and fund a grant program for statewide public safety radio communication system (ARMER system) equipment.

Effective radio communication is the backbone of public safety in the State of Minnesota. First responders, firefighters, emergency medical personnel, and law enforcement personnel depend upon it to effectively perform their jobs. Emergency radio communication saves lives and serves every resident of the State of Minnesota.

In many local jurisdictions, the radios currently operating on the ARMER system are outdated. Radios are costly to maintain and replace and, in local communities, where budgets are tight, it is very difficult to plan for the costly process of replacing these critical communication tools. The replacement of public safety radios directly affects local taxpayers. Radios are critical to deploying resources, protecting property and life, and protecting our workers. However, they often get overlooked for replacement in many areas of the state because there is no dedicated funding source. Emergency services departments rely on the ARMER radio system to provide the interoperability between the departments at the local, regional, state, and federal levels.

Many radios currently operating on the ARMER system were purchased before year 2011, and no longer receive vendor support. It is extremely difficult to find parts to fix or maintain these radios and it would be in the best interest of everyone for these radios to be replaced. In addition to outdated equipment, other radios currently in use will require software upgrades in order for communications to be encrypted, which is now required by the Federal Bureau of Investigations when transmitting criminal justice data.

Prices of new radios range from \$2,500 to \$4,800 each; this expense does not include costs to program the radios or any additional equipment or supplies required to add the radio onto the statewide ARMER system.

Local governments across the state support the creation and funding of a grant program allowing for the critical upgrade of public safety radios, as well as a sustainable program which supports ongoing replacement of these radios.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Warring".

Mike Warring  
Chair, Metropolitan Emergency Services Board  
Isanti County Commissioner

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jill Rohret".

Jill Rohret  
Executive Director  
Metropolitan Emergency Services Board