



# Association of Minnesota Counties

125 Charles Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55103-2108 | Main Line/Switchboard: 651-224-3344, Fax: 651-224-6540 | [www.mncounties.org](http://www.mncounties.org)

May 1, 2023

**RE: Support for ARMER Radio Funding in SF2909**

Dear Members of the Judiciary and Public Safety Conference Committee:

**On behalf of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), a voluntary association representing all 87 counties, we want to thank you for your work on the Omnibus Judiciary and Public Safety Bill.** As you take up the provisions contained in SF2909 we ask that you consider AMC's positions on the following items:

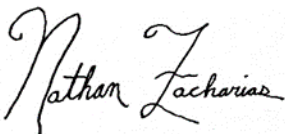
**The Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER)** is the backbone of public safety communication infrastructure in the State of Minnesota. ARMER radios are used statewide by first responders, firefighters, and law enforcement personnel to communicate and to serve those in need. Having effective communication tools, such as radios, is essential to successfully provide public safety and saves lives in communities throughout the State.

Radios that serve the ARMER system are outdated in many jurisdictions. Counties and other local jurisdictions struggle to fund the maintenance and replacement costs for this vital piece of public safety infrastructure. Local governments often operate on tight budgets, especially in greater Minnesota where the need for radio communications is greatest. Planning for the costly process of replacing this critical infrastructure has proven difficult for local governments. State assistance is necessary to keep our emergency communications up to date and we urge the state to fund a grant program for local jurisdictions to upgrade ARMER radios. We also encourage the Legislature to identify a sustainable funding model to support ongoing replacement and long-term planning for ARMER equipment and infrastructure maintenance.

**While the need for ARMER radio replacement funds is far greater than what appears in either version of SF2909—the original funding bills introduced in the House and Senate included \$250 million—AMC strongly supports the Senate position of \$9.945 million in grants to local government units.**

**Again, we sincerely appreciate your consideration of our perspective.** Should you have any questions about the information provided above, please don't hesitate to reach out to your local county commissioners or AMC's Technology Policy Analyst, Nathan Zacharias, at (715) 222-2824.

Sincerely,



Nathan Zacharias, Technology Policy Analyst  
Association of Minnesota Counties