

**Date:** March 28, 2023

**To:** Public Safety Finance and Policy  
Rep. Kelly Moeller, Chair; Rep. Sandra Feist, Vice Chair

**From:** Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind & Hard of Hearing

## Please support Next Generation 911 funding – HF2890

We at the Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind & Hard of Hearing enthusiastically support the \$7M appropriation for the transition to Next Generation 911 (NG911). With NG911, call centers will be better able to locate senders of text messages who cannot call using voice. NG911 will also make it possible to send images to 911 operators, a potentially lifesaving feature for those in our community who experience language barriers due to language deprivation in early childhood.

We are especially excited about the possibility of adding text *from* 911,<sup>1</sup> which would allow call centers to alert citizens in an area when a major emergency incident is about to affect them.

As a Deaf person, one of my biggest fears is emerging from an office, bathroom, dressing room, or apartment and finding that everybody else has fled due to some unknown danger. Countless horror movies have been made based on this premise, with the protagonists emerging to find that everybody has vanished without a trace. For many of the 20% of Minnesotans with hearing loss, this fear is not mere fiction.

On January 13, 2018, I was in Honolulu meeting with an all-Deaf board. We were on a school campus that was deserted for the weekend. The only other person in the building, an administrator, was also Deaf. Suddenly most of our phones buzzed. It was an emergency message alerting to an incoming missile. Because of that emergency alert, we were able to locate the school's designated shelter and take cover. Thankfully, the alert turned out to be an error. Had it been real, we would have had less than 20 minutes to take cover, and as scary as it was, it would've been so much worse had we found out only through encountering the panicked people fleeing the streets of Honolulu.

Please support the \$7M appropriation for the transition to NG911 in HF2890 so that the 20% of Minnesotans with hearing loss can have more equitable protection in emergencies.

Signed,



Alicia Lane, *Government Relations Director*



<sup>1</sup> <https://urgentcomm.com/collections/minnesota-starts-regionally-in-pursuit-of-statewide-text-to-911-implementation/4/?pg=4>