

George County Board of Supervisors

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April 01, 2024

329 Ratliff Street
Lucedale, Mississippi 39452
601-947-7506

The Honorable Mike Ezell
443 Cannon House Building
Washington, DC

RE: George County: Inter-Operable Regional Emergency Communications Array and Tower

Dear Congressman Ezell,

Major communication "dead zones" is how a third-party firm describes George County's emergency VHF radio coverage for the Sheriff's Department and first responders. Covering these communication dead zones will greatly improve rural response times and benefit the overall safety for law enforcement and first responders.

The Board is requesting \$1.6 Million through the U.S. Dept. of Justice's COPS Grant to strategically place and construct a new regional emergency communication tower and install a digital communication array.

The proposed tower will be 275 to 300 ft. high and equipped with a new digital communication array with three (3) signal amplifiers and two (2) long range microwave dish repeaters for local and regional coverage.

Another major benefit is Inter-operability; this tower/array will significantly expand the State's MSWIN coverage throughout South Mississippi for all state emergency agencies and surrounding counties (Jackson, Stone, Perry, and Greene).

The tower's digital technology will also allow the Sheriff's Department, MS Highway Patrol, MDOT, local volunteer fire departments, and first responders to effectively use just one handheld unit instead of currently carrying three VHF radio units to a scene.

The request for \$1.6 Million covers a vast majority of the project cost including; engineering design, communications array equipment, computer hardware/software, tower construction, array installation, inter-operability with current local towers, and coverage certification testing.

The Board is committed to this vital public safety project. We already have an agreement with a third-party firm for signal tests to determine the best tower location and we are currently meeting with state organizers for further expansion into the MSWIN system.

Myself, and the entire Board of Supervisors, deeply appreciate your consideration on this project and we look forward to working with your fine staff again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kelly Wright". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a blue oval scribble.

Supervisor Kelly Wright, 2024 Board President & County 911 Committee

Cc: Supervisor Frankie Massey, County 911 Committee & Ken Flanagan, Community Development