



April 19, 2022

To Governor Pritzker:

We are writing to all involved parties today from the Illinois chapters of the Association of Public Safety Officials (APCO) and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA). We believe we represent all the dedicated professionals working in 9-1-1 in the State of Illinois and have the best interests of the entire 9-1-1 industry in mind with this urgent letter.

Sweeping 9-1-1 surcharge funds for any purpose, including for 9-8-8, is problematic for three reasons. First, 9-1-1 centers around Illinois depend on surcharge money in order to operate. Any unforeseen or unbudgeted decrease in that revenue could have serious repercussions. Second, sweeping these funds makes Illinois ineligible for federal grant funds at a time where Next Generation 9-1-1 initiatives are ramping up. Last, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has detailed what expenses are acceptable for 9-1-1. Expenses for 9-8-8 would not qualify according to the FCC's standards.

As stated in the Statewide 9-1-1 Advisory Board's Annual Report to the Illinois General Assembly, issued on March 1, 2022, "Every effort must be made to ensure that funds collected for 9-1-1 purposes are not used for non-9-1-1 related activities or programs to allow the Department to apply for any federal grants and retain federal funds which have been previously awarded." Illinois has been ineligible for federal grant funding in the past, including as recently as 2015. Sweeping funds sets a bad precedent and opens the door for using 9-1-1 funds for other financial shortfalls in the State. 9-1-1 surcharge revenue can only be used for 9-1-1 purposes.

The FCC created a 9-1-1 Strike Force that was charged with studying the problem of 9-1-1 fee diversion. According to the 9-1-1 Advisory Board's Report, the FCC's Strike Force recognized 9-1-1 fee diversion negatively impacts public safety, 9-1-1 operations, first responders, and the fiscal sustainability of 9-1-1 service in the U.S.

We urge quick action to rectify this situation. The comptroller needs to delay payment of the \$5,000,000, and amended language needs to be introduced for the fall veto session, replacing the language in HB 4700 "Statewide 9-8-8 Fund" to "General Revenue Fund" on page 127, line 2.

The impacts of the language regarding the sweeping of 9-1-1 funds in HB 4700 has a negative impact on 9-1-1 and public safety as a whole. We strongly request delaying the transfer by the Comptroller until the legislature can switch the transfer to the general revenue fund.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brent Reynolds".

Brent Reynolds, Illinois APCO President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shelley Dallas".

Shelley Dallas, Illinois NENA President

CC: Senator Harmon, Representative Welch, Comptroller Mendoza, Treasurer Frerichs