

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1501

March 31, 2023

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, &
Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Matt Cartwright
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, &
Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Cartwright:

As you craft the fiscal year 2024 Commerce, Justice, Science, & Related Agencies Appropriations bill, I respectfully request that you include \$287,000 in community project funding for the Howard County Microwave Security and Radio Project. The entity to receive the funding for this project is the Howard County Sheriff Department, located at 124 South Park Place, Cresco, Iowa 52136.

This project would equip all nine field officers of the Howard County Sheriff Department with portable handheld radios, which none of them currently have, as well as provide a microwave communications link between all seven of the critical communication locations in Howard County. It would also provide a tenth portable handheld radio to the Department's Emergency Management Coordinator/911 Director. The microwave communications link will enable law enforcement to install security camera systems in key locations in each of the rural communities the Sheriff Department serves. The microwave communications link will provide real-time monitoring and recording from these security systems instead of requiring a deputy to go to each location physically to download information.

This system will be the main backbone of Howard County's communication and technology system, given the current system is severely outdated, unreliable, and fails to assist law enforcement and emergency management officials in their mission to safely and timely address crimes. Law enforcement must often "borrow" the county's Fire channel, which leads to confusion, interference, and clutter on the Fire channel, which should only be for fire incidents.

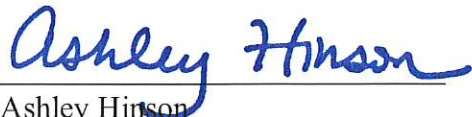
Recently, several criminal incidents in Howard County could have been either averted or aided by a reliable, real-time communication system, including: a bank robbery, numerous reckless

driving incidents, and farm, house, and local small business fires. Working, portable radios for the county's Sheriff Department would have benefitted law enforcement in halting these crimes, as well as by ensuring officer safety during the response. The need to outfit law enforcement with handheld mobile radios is essential and will ensure officer safety and ability to respond to emergencies efficiently and effectively.

If awarded, this funding would help make Howard County communications interoperable and provide better public safety response and security for the whole community. The Howard County Sheriff Department is in desperate need of this microwave communications link as well as working, portable radios for their officers.

I strongly urge the Committee to include this community project funding request in the FY24 Commerce, Justice, Science, & Related Agencies Appropriations bill. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Ashley Hinson
Member of Congress
Committee on Appropriations