

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

May 8, 2024

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 2025 Commerce, Justice, Science, & Related Agencies Appropriations bill, I respectfully request that you include \$1,100,000 in community project funding for the Howard County Communication and Radio Project. The entity to receive the funding for this project is the Howard County Sheriff's Department, located at 124 South Park Place, Cresco, Iowa 52136.

This funding is intended to facilitate essential upgrades to the radio communication equipment of the Howard County Sheriff's Department and to provide new dual-band handheld and mobile radios for the department. These enhancements will enable law enforcement personnel to communicate seamlessly, eliminating the need to manually switch sites each time they change locations. Consequently, deputies will be able to communicate effectively with other law enforcement agencies operating on the Iowa Statewide Interoperability Communication System (ISICS) network, including those in surrounding rural counties and the Iowa State Patrol. The primary goal of this investment is to address communication challenges faced by deputies and bolster law enforcement's capacity to respond in rural Howard County.

The project will improve public safety radio and paging communications within the county by establishing additional transmitter sites for certain county frequencies and simulcasting others. This enhancement will benefit all 9,469 residents of Howard County, as well as those who traverse its roads daily. Howard County is passed by two busy highways, Highway 9 and Highway 63, which experience significant traffic throughout the day.

Currently, deputies must manually switch channels every time they arrive at a different scene in the absence of simulcast capability. This can pose challenges in high-stress situations such as

high-speed chases or car accidents. Simulcasting will alleviate many of these communication issues. Additionally, the acquisition of dual-band radios will enable law enforcement to communicate with counterparts in northern Minnesota who use the Armer system, similar to the ISICS system in Iowa. This communication capability is integral to the daily operations of Howard County law enforcement. Presently, the only means of communication with these partners is through patching their system, which has numerous limitations, including reduced coverage and the inability to communicate effectively during responses.

Improving law enforcement communication in the county will enhance response capabilities and contribute to the safety and well-being of both officers and civilians.

I strongly urge the Committee to incorporate this community project funding request into the FY25 Commerce, Justice, Science, & Related Agencies Appropriations bill. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



Ashley Hinson

Member of Congress

Committee on Appropriations