

January 3, 2022

Sen. Maria Cantwell
Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
425 Hart Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Sen. Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
512 Dirksen Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Nomination of Gigi Sohn to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

Dear Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker,

We write to express our support for Ms. Gigi Sohn to be a commissioner at the FCC. We have each served as the Chief of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau at the FCC. We are fully familiar with the responsibilities of that Bureau at the FCC, its authorities, and the important role FCC commissioners play in ensuring that first responders and the public can communicate reliably and effectively, especially in emergencies.

Based on our knowledge and experience with the public safety communications role of the FCC, our knowledge of FCC Commissioner nominee Gigi Sohn, and our work and dedication to make the public safer, we enthusiastically recommend that you confirm Gigi Sohn to serve as an FCC Commissioner.

Ms. Sohn's years of advocacy in support of the FCC ensuring that our first responders have the reliable, resilient, and secure communications resources they need, and that public safety communications be given the priority they deserve given their criticality to mitigate harm, reflect her qualifications for the job. We know and appreciate that Ms. Sohn has been focused for a long time on what the FCC must do to make the public safer. She advocates that even as technology changes, it is of the highest priority for the FCC to use the authority it has to ensure that first responders have the communications support that they need, and that the public can reach help in an emergency over the vital commercial networks that the FCC regulates. She views these technology changes as opportunities to further facilitate emergency communications.

The Committee need look no further than its own proceedings to see Ms. Sohn express her commitment in this area, her appreciation of these concerns, and her advocacy of the importance of effective and reliable communications for first responders and for the public in emergencies. For example, on July 25, 2013, Ms. Sohn testified to this Committee:

-- "Public safety rules must ensure that emergency services like 9-1-1 and geolocation technologies continue to help first responders offer emergency care, regardless of whether the network that the customer uses is wireless or wireline, copper or fiber."¹

-- "[T]he moments in which the public relies upon emergency services like 9-1-1 are literally life-or-death, and it is crucial that policymakers implement rules that maintain the public safety components of the phone network."²

Ms. Sohn's views and advocacy to this Committee in 2013 of the criticality of public safety communications to the FCC's mission, first responders and the public, also was clearly reflected in her recent testimony to the Committee in connection with her nomination to the Commission. She outlined her views in responding to Questions for the Record (QFRs):

-- "I would seek to ensure that every rulemaking, adjudication and decision of the Commission considers the potential implications for public safety. In particular, the Commission must ensure that police, firefighters and other first responders have access to the resources they need – especially in times of crisis."³

-- She testified specifically about ensuring that no interference with public safety communications will be tolerated: "As a first priority, I would seek to ensure that public safety communications cannot be blocked or throttled."⁴

-- Likewise, she cited the importance of ensuring that first responders have "adequate and secure spectrum..."; "robust communications networks...[reliable] during national disasters or terrorist attacks"; "network reliability and resiliency"; and her commitment to "consult regularly with law enforcement, firefighters, EMTs and other first responders to ensure that the unique needs of each community are met." She cited the illegal use of contraband cell phones by incarcerated individuals as a law enforcement concern that she would work to address "consistent with the FCC's statutory authority."⁵

Each of us believe that Ms. Sohn, as a commissioner, would be a strong advocate for the public safety and homeland security communications policies and initiatives that are critical to the American people and first responders. We are deeply familiar with that mission and the important role that the FCC plays. Confirming Ms. Sohn would enable her to bring her understanding, prioritization, and commitment to these issues to the Commission. It is not only our words, but her own words as well, that speak to her understanding of this, long before she was nominated for this role.

¹ <https://www.commerce.senate.gov/services/files/C5B12974-F5D6-48F9-99DC-2854DF0C2FC7> (p.12)

² *Ibid.*

³ [Questions for the Record](#), Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, "Nominations of Gigi Sohn, to be a Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission; Alan Davidson, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information, DOC; Viqar Ahmad, to be Assistant Secretary for Administration and Chief Financial Officer, DOC; and Jed Kolko, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Economic Affairs, DOC" (Dec. 1, 2021).

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

We urge the Committee to confirm Gigi Sohn expeditiously so she can get to work on the important mission Congress has charged the FCC with advancing. She is someone we believe will be a strong, effective, and knowledgeable advocate for the public's safety as an FCC Commissioner.

Jamie Barnett, RDML, USN (Retired)

David S. Turetsky