

North Central Texas Council Of Governments

Brian Loughmiller
Mayor
City of McKinney
P. O. Box 517
McKinney, TX 75070

Dear Brian Loughmiller,

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) currently administers the State's 9-1-1 Program for your city/county, as directed by legislation enacted in 1987. NCTCOG is recognized nationally as a leader in the provision of 9-1-1 services. They have more than met the legislative charge of providing emergency dispatch centers with the latest and best available equipment and technology; and assuring that this equipment and technology is operating or backed up on a 24 hour/365 day basis. Additionally, they have actively assisted with the training and certification of dispatch center personnel.

I am writing this letter to you on behalf of the NCTCOG 9-1-1 Regional Advisory Committee, which is made up of elected and appointed officials from the entities which are served by the NCTCOG 9-1-1 program. We believe there is a positive opportunity for the participants in the NCTCOG program to have a real and larger impact on policy and fiscal matters than is now available through the state administrative program.

In the most recent legislative session, the Health and Safety Code was amended by SB 1108/HB 3462 to permit Councils of Governments/Regional Planning Commissions to establish Regional Emergency Communications Districts (ECD). We see a lot of potential advantages and opportunities that would be to our benefit by creating an ECD. I will attempt to lay out our reasoning in the following paragraphs.

Currently, our citizens and businesses are charged 50 cents on their phone bills to pay for 9-1-1 services. This money is remitted to and held by the state until the legislature appropriates all or part of the funds collected to the Texas Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC). CSEC then allocates these funds to councils of governments. The problem is that the Legislature does not always appropriate all of the funds collected, but rather retains some of the funds to show (on paper) a balanced state budget. Currently, the state is holding over \$150 million. Over 15% of this amount has been collected from our Region.

If we were to create an ECD, the monies collected through the maximum 50 cent fee would be remitted in their entirety to this district. The major benefit from this, aside from all the funds collected in our region coming back to it, is that a long-range strategic plan could be adopted outlining future capital improvements and replacements for our dispatch centers based on a known and reliable stream of revenue. Under the present situation, we have no certainty of the amount of funding that the region will receive during any given biennium. This results in a lot of inefficiencies because long-term planning for capital equipment is difficult to do.

The other major benefit to be realized from having our own district is one of local control. Policy and budgetary matters would be decided by a Board of Directors consisting of local elected officials from entities served by NCTCOG's 9-1-1 Program. An initial ECD Board of Directors consisting of a representative from participating entities would meet to determine the size of the permanent Board, and the qualifications of its members. At least two-thirds of the initial Board members must be elected officials.

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The new law specifies that councils of governments, NCTCOG in our case, will continue as staff to the district. This assures that there will be no disruption to the current services provided to our citizens and businesses through the already existing dispatch centers.

The new law requires that the governing body of each entity now served by a councils of governments pass a resolution calling for the creation of an ECD. Many of our entities have already indicated an interest in doing so. Thus, the Regional Advisory Council is now reaching out to everyone to see if there is a broader interest in creating a district. Please use the enclosed form to let us know of your preference and/or if you would like to have a meeting to learn more about this matter and to get any questions answered. Also enclosed is a sample resolution, which can be used if you are ready to support the creation of an EDS. The final enclosure is a membership list for the Regional Advisory Committee. Please submit your response forms or resolutions to Mike Eastland, the NCTCOG Executive Director, using the contact information below. I would also encourage you to call me at 903-408-4146, if you have any questions. Other members of the Advisory Committee will be happy to receive inquiries.

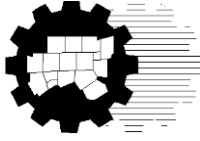
Yours Truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Horn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long tail.

John Horn
County Judge, Hunt County
Chair, 9-1-1 Regional Advisory Committee

Contact information for Mike Eastland is:
Mailing Address: PO Box 5888, Arlington, Texas 76005
Email Address: meastland@nctcog.org
Phone: 817-695-9101
Fax: 817-704-2543

Enclosures:
Questionnaire Form
Resolution
9-1-1 Regional Advisory Committee Membership List
Frequently Asked Questions



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