



EXHIBIT 5
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 HB 16

FACT SHEET

TITLE: Statewide Public Safety Communications System

BACKGROUND: When local, state, tribal, and federal agencies need to work together—whether to put out a fire, find a lost child, protect the border, or ensure the public stays safe—they must communicate. This is easy enough if they’re face to face, but not so easy if they are each using radio systems in different parts of the radio frequency spectrum (think AM versus FM radio), or using systems which operate differently (think of having an analog TV that won’t display digital programming). These are what we term “disparate” systems. The most common form of a public safety radio communication system is a Land Mobile Radio System (LMRS), which is a wireless communications system intended for use by emergency responders (law enforcement, fire, emergency medical, etc.) in vehicles (mobiles) or on foot (portables).

The Statewide Public Safety Communications System in Montana is a LMR “system of systems”. Local and regional LMR systems through the use of technology (software and hardware) are connected together to become an “interoperable” system. The ability to allow disparate LMRs to work together—or combine these systems so communication can take place or interoperate—is called “interoperability.” Interoperability is defined as “the ability to share information via voice and data signals on demand, in real time, when needed and as authorized.”

After the attacks of September 11th and Hurricane Katrina, one of the core issues that were identified that hindered emergency response was disparate or “non-interoperable” communications systems. Subsequently the federal government formed the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and funding programs to modernize communications systems and encourage interoperability. Montana’s efforts to improve statewide communications interoperability started with independent, locally-driven, regional projects that were primarily funded with federal grants.

One of the requirements that DHS placed on the states, in order to receive federal funding, was that each state create a “Statewide Interoperability Governance Board” (SIGB), appoint a “Statewide Interoperability Coordinator” (SWIC) and develop a State Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP).

In 2011, Governor Brian Schweitzer signed Executive Order number 13-2011, which *established a SIGB to direct the operation of the statewide public safety radio system*. The purpose of the SIGB is to ensure the future of interoperable communications in Montana as described in Montana’s Homeland Security Strategic Plan and the State Communication Interoperability Plan.

Warren Dupuis, Chief of Staff to the State Chief Information Officer was appointed as SWIC and directed to: oversee the daily operation of the state's interoperability efforts under the guidance of the Board to include grant coordination, outreach and policy development; coordinate interoperability and communications projects; maintain governance structures; assemble work groups to develop and implement key initiatives; and implement the SCIP.

Since before 2004, the current system has been funded by a variety of sources including approximately: \$9,500,000 in State Appropriations; \$38,615,000 in Homeland Security Grants; \$6,400,000 U.S Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration grant, \$6,000,000 U.S. Department of Justice, Community Oriented Policing Services, technology grant and other sources, which include investments by the National Guard, Bureau of Land Management and State Agencies. The total investment to date is approximately \$66,400,000.

Currently the system includes 92 sites with microwave connectivity, with five additional sites under construction, that are spread across Montana from the northwest corner of the state in Lincoln County across the Highway 2 corridor and the Canadian Border to the northeast of the state in Sheridan County; from the southwest corner of the state in Beaverhead County and the Montana – Idaho border and across the southern part of Montana along the Interstate 90 and 94 corridors to Richland County and the Montana-North Dakota border. The system covers over 2,300 highway miles.

Currently, over 6,000 federal, state and local emergency responders rely on the Statewide Public Safety Communications System for day-to-day interoperable communications. The system provides a critical communications tool to these emergency response agencies and responders to save lives and protect personal property.

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