



**HB 110 Interested Party Testimony
Alan Close, Cleveland Communications
Senate Finance Committee
May 18, 2021**

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today as an interested party on HB 110, the state biennial budget bill.

My name is Alan Close, I'm the President of Cleveland Communications, Inc. a family owned small business located in Parma. I have with me today, Tim Sopkovich the Police chief of Brunswick Hills Township in Medina County.

Cleveland Communications, Inc. is an L3Harris public safety radio system integrator dedicated to providing best in class communications equipment and services to First Responders throughout northern Ohio. We maintain radio systems for the City of Parma, Ottawa County, Huron County, Medina County, the City of Elyria and soon Lorain County. The large number of county and city agencies that depend on these critical communications systems know that Cleveland Communications and L3Harris are dedicated to providing that critical lifeline they depend on not just for day-to-day communications but those moments when lives depend on being able to communicate emergency information.

These agencies have chosen specifically to not join the Multi-Agency Radio Communication System (MARCS) offered by the State of Ohio through the Department of Administrative Services. Sheriff Corbin can elaborate further, but the reasons why local agencies have used their public tax dollars for a non-MARCS system are cost, control, coverage and customer service. They have purchased a radio system that they own, that costs less, provides greater coverage and has better customer service than the MARCS system. Simply, they have purchased the radio system that best fits their local needs.

(Chief Sopkovich) Thank you for this opportunity to address the committee. Most of the First responders in Medina County have been using an L3Harris/Cleveland Communications radio system since 2015 for the critical communications we rely on every day. As Chief of the Brunswick Hills Police department, I am a MARCS radio system user. My dispatch functions come through the City of Brunswick. This creates an interoperability issue with The Medina County Sheriff's deputies, Hinckley and Medina Township officers we rely on for back up in critical situations.

The Ohio MARCS radio system does not provide me with acceptable coverage often leaving my police officers without the ability to talk to the Brunswick dispatch center. All of my radios are programmed to operate on the Medina County L3Harris radio system. When the Ohio MARCS system suffers an outage I'm able to switch to the Medina County radio system but I lose contact with my dispatch center in Brunswick when I do that. The ISSI is a simple but important link to allow my officers to use

the Medina radio system fulltime with superior coverage while allowing me to maintain contact with the Brunswick dispatch center.

(Alan) The below graphic shows the non-MARCS agencies in northern Ohio. The issue that is becoming more of a problem is these radio systems currently don't have the ability to communicate and be interoperable with the MARCS system. A critical link between the L3Harris networks in northern Ohio and the Ohio MARCS radio systems is desperately needed.

Fortunately, this problem has an easy solution, one that we have been proposing to DAS for several years. Both Ohio MARCS and the L3Harris networks in Ohio are APCO P-25 based systems. APCO P-25 provides a design standard for interfacing disparate radio systems in the ISSI which connects these systems at the highest level. Giving the two systems the ability to talk to each other only requires DAS to purchase an Inter-Sub System Interface (ISSI) which once installed will allow for communication between the two networks.

We proposed an amendment to HB 110 which would provide the funding for DAS to purchase an ISSI from Motorola for Ohio MARCS which when installed will be interfaced to our ISSI in Parma completing the link between the two networks.

This purchase would allow for local governments, law enforcement, and health and safety-first responders to continue to purchase the radio system that best fits their needs while also providing true interoperability between systems.

We'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.

