



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

**December 1, 2021**

## **Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government**

### **Testimony on Senate Bill 673**

**Senator Howard Marklein and Representative Amy Loudenberg**

Thank you, Chairman Petrowski and committee members for hearing Senate Bill 673 (SB 673), relating to Next Generation 911 and geographic information system grants. Thank you Chairman Petrowski and Senator Cowles for co-sponsoring this bipartisan legislation.

Did you know, the first call to 911 was placed in February of 1968? Prior to that, individuals needed to dial local 10-digit phone numbers to reach police, fire or emergency services. Thanks to 911, throughout the country, a call to 911 quickly connects you to the help you need.

Most 911 systems were originally built using analog rather than digital technologies, which means that Public Safety Answering Point (PSAPs) need to be upgraded to a digital or Internet Protocol (IP)-based 911 system, commonly referred to as Next Generation 911 (NG-911). Once upgraded, NG-911 will allow PSAPs to easily transfer calls to other call centers, re-route calls in case a PSAP experiences call overload, increase data sharing by receiving photos and videos and assist with more accurate location detection.

In Wisconsin, work is well underway to upgrade the current 911 System to NG-911. During the 2021-2023 budget process, we continued to invest in NG-911 infrastructure at the state level, by appropriating over \$19 million SEG funding from the Police and Fire Protection Fund to develop the NG-911 Emergency Services Internet Protocol Network (ESInet) and Geographical Information System (GIS) database. ESInet, which is the networking backbone, is a critical element that will allow for interoperability between all the PSAPs and is the first major piece of infrastructure needed to complete the NG-911 upgrade statewide.

In order for local PSAPs to provide NG-911 level services, many of them will need to upgrade their infrastructure and equipment. Last session, [2019 Act 26](#) created a grant program for this purpose and an investment of \$6 million in SEG funding from the Police and Fire Protection Fund was appropriated in the 2021-2023 budget.

That's all good news. But we still have a few more things to take care of, which is why we are having this hearing on SB 673 today.

NG-911 implementation is dependent upon the development and maintenance of GIS data, including street centerlines, address points, and emergency response boundaries. Standardized geospatial data is a pivotal piece of NG-911, helping to accurately locate 911 calls and efficiently route responders via dispatch.

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Local governments will need to prepare and enhance their GIS data in order to meet the technical requirements to enable NG-911. The new GIS grant program created in SB 673 will assist counties with the cost of data preparation, data gathering, data creation, geographic information system staffing, data preparation and collection contracts, and training. Under SB 673, the grant program would be administered by the Department of Military Affairs (DMA), in consultation with the state's Land Information Program and the 911 Subcommittee of the Interoperability Council. Funding for the grant program (\$1.5 million from the SEG Police and Fire Protection Fee) was already set aside in the JFC Supplemental appropriation in the budget for this purpose.

Finally, SB 673 makes clarifications and technical updates to current law providing DMA with the authority and responsibility to run the statewide 911 system. These changes are part of the recommendations made by the *2019 Statewide 911 System Assessment Report* - [https://dma.wi.gov/DMA/divisions/oec/library/2019/2019\\_WI\\_Statewide\\_911\\_System\\_Assessment-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dma.wi.gov/DMA/divisions/oec/library/2019/2019_WI_Statewide_911_System_Assessment-FINAL-1.pdf).

This bill is supported by the Wisconsin Land Information Association and the Wisconsin Counties Association.

We hope you'll support SB 673 as we continue to take the necessary steps to update our statewide 911 system.

Thank you for your time today, and we are happy to answer any questions.



**December 1, 2021**

**To: Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government**  
**From: Wisconsin Land Information Association**  
**Re: Support for Senate Bill 673 - Next Generation 911 Geographic Information Systems Grants**

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Good morning, Chairperson Petrowski and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you in support of Senate Bill 673.

My name is Zach Nienow, and I am a Geospatial Project Manager with Ayres Associates, as well as President-Elect of the Wisconsin Land Information Association (WLIA). Joining me today is Sandy Disrud, Rock County Register of Deeds and Chair of WLIA's Legislative Committee.

For background, WLIA is a grassroots organization consisting of over 1,000 public and private sector professionals who develop, maintain, distribute, and utilize land information systems and data critical to all sectors of business in Wisconsin. Key geospatial data includes parcels, the Public Land Survey System (PLSS), aerial imagery, road centerlines, addresses, elevation, streams and water bodies, zoning, government boundaries and geodetic control. The data our members produce is essential for economic development, public safety, emergency management, environmental monitoring, engineering, transportation, marketing and demographic analysis, utilities and more.

Specific to the legislation before you today, WLIA members develop and maintain the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data that is the backbone of Next Generation 911. GIS is a computerized digital mapping system consisting of points, lines and polygons that represent real-world geographic features. This representation is referred to as "geospatial data".

Implementation of NG911 requires Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) to have geospatial datasets that cover the entire state. GIS data is created at the local level and must be updated regularly.

These datasets, including street centerlines, address points, and emergency response boundaries, are used to help identify and validate 911 caller locations, route callers to the correct PSAP, and efficiently dispatch responders. Without this key function, NG911 will not work.

Significantly, Senate Bill 673, authored by Senator Marklein and Representative Loudenbeck, recognizes the additional burden placed on local governments to meet the technical needs associated with NG911 by establishing a grant program to assist with GIS data development and maintenance. Under the bill, the Department of Military Affairs would develop and administer grants to counties to assist with data preparation, data gathering, data creation, geographic information system staffing, data preparation and collection contracts, and training.

By enabling local governments to meet NG911 data needs, Senate Bill 673 presents an important step towards the goal of a modernized, more reliable, and more efficient 911 emergency response system in Wisconsin.

Thank you for your time today, and your consideration of this important legislation. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Members of the Assembly Committee on State Affairs

FROM: Kathren Sukus, Rock County 9-1-1 Communications Director

DATE: November 30, 2021

RE: Assembly Bill 708: NG911 & GIS Grant Funding

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I am writing to express my support for Assembly Bill 708 which will continue grant funding to public safety answering points (PSAPs) to prepare for the implementation of Next Generation 911 (NG911). The bill also includes geographic information system (GIS) grant funding to make certain all jurisdictions in Wisconsin meet industry standards based on the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) NG911 Data Model.

As I am sure you have heard before the current 911 system is reliant on 1960's technology/infrastructure and while many centers across the state, including Rock County, have upgraded their call handling equipment to keep up with emerging technologies, we are at a standstill. We are at a standstill because the current analog infrastructure has been stretched to its limit with how it can handle these new technologies, therefore our state (and country) are in dire need of an upgrade to a digital infrastructure in order to meet the public expectation of being able to contact 911 at any time on any device. Wisconsin is well on its way to making this a reality thanks to previous grant funding, but the other reality is even with the initial funding not all center's will be able to obtain further equipment or the required infrastructure unless there is continued financial assistance. For that reason the NG911 grant program must continue so that no matter which 911 center is reached in our state, the citizens and visitors will receive the same level and quality of service.

The other portion of this bill addresses GIS grant funding. GIS is the heart of 911. It provides for the proper routing of 911 calls and the detailed location information for 911 professionals and other first responders to quickly respond to emergency calls for service when seconds matter. GIS data must be accurate, consistent and complete for NG911 to work the way it is intended where 911 Centers across the state, country and Canada will have interoperability if/when an incident occurs that requires assistance from more than one center.

Thank you for your consideration on this important public safety legislation. I wish I could be there in person today, but would be happy to answer any questions from the perspective of a PSAP if any committee member wishes to contact me: 608-757-5014 or [sukus@co.rock.wi.us](mailto:sukus@co.rock.wi.us).



22 EAST MIFFLIN STREET, SUITE 900  
MADISON, WI 53703  
TOLL FREE: 1.866.404.2700  
PHONE: 608.663.7188  
FAX: 608.663.7189  
WWW.WICOUNTIES.ORG

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government

**FROM:** Marcie Rainbolt, Government Affairs Associate

**DATE:** December 1, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Support Senate Bill 673: Next Generation 911 and geographic information system grants

Modernizing Wisconsin's 911 system has been a priority for counties and other stakeholders since the early 2000s. Starting in the 2017-19 state budget, the state has made investments in 911 for the creation of an emergency services IP network (ESInet) which will allow Wisconsin to move towards a long overdue upgrade for 911. Currently, the state allocated \$7.9 million in 2021-22 and \$11.4 million in 2022-23 from the Police and Fire Protection Fund (PFPF) to build the ESInet and for geographic information system (GIS) management. These funds will help ensure that the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) is able to continue the progress of transitioning the state to Next Generation 911 (NG911). Additionally, \$6 million was invested in the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) state grant so that PSAPs may update their equipment to NG911 capabilities.

A key part of the transition to NG911 is updating our GIS in Wisconsin for validation of addresses and ensuring the correct routing of 911 calls to the proper PSAP. Having the most accurate GIS information could save critical time when responding to an emergency and is essential for dispatching emergency responders from the correct jurisdiction. Essentially, having updated GIS data could mean the difference between life and death. The state's budget bill, 2021 Act 58, provided \$1.5 million in grant funds set aside in the Joint Committee on Finance (JCF) supplemental appropriation for GIS grants to counties.

Senate Bill (SB) 673 allows the DMA to provide grants to counties for GIS. The grant must be developed by the DMA and may be used for data preparation, data gathering, data creation, GIS staffing, data preparation and collection contracts, and training. Further, SB 673 ensures DMA is the responsible state agency for the statewide

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emergency number system functionality and responsible for issuing grants to PSAPs for purposes of NG911.

The Wisconsin Counties Association, on behalf of its county members, respectfully requests your support of SB 673 so Wisconsin can continue to modernize our emergency number system and transition to NG911. Please contact me if you have any questions.



OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

State of Wisconsin / DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

P.O. BOX 8111  
MADISON 53708-8111  
TELEPHONE 608 242-3000  
DSN 724-3000

December 1, 2021

Chairman Petrowski and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 673, regarding Next Generation 911 and geographic information system grants.

Citizens rely on 911 every day to request assistance in what could be their greatest time of need. As technology changes, the public has an expectation that 911 changes with it. Today, this new change is known as Next Generation 911. Achieving Next Generation 911 statewide requires a clear outline of responsibilities for all stakeholders that play a role in its implementation. There is a need for statutory language that clearly outlines the Department of Military Affairs' responsibilities regarding emergency number systems, specifically the duties required to facilitate the implementation, operation, and ongoing maintenance of a statewide Next Generation 911 system.

Next Generation 911 brings a lot of changes to 911 services and technology and heavily relies on local geographic information system data to route 911 calls with greater accuracy, leading to faster response times. In other states, this essential piece of Next Generation 911 implementation has taken years to complete. County land information offices and other local personnel in Wisconsin have continued to express the need for additional funding and resources to implement the changes required for statewide Next Generation 911 implementation. A grant program specifically aimed at assisting with local geographic information system data creation and preparation for Next Generation 911 will further Wisconsin's goal of replacing outdated 911 infrastructure with this new technology.

As Wisconsin continues to move forward with Next Generation 911, clearly outlining stakeholder responsibilities and providing additional resources at the state and local level for geographic information system data will be required for successful implementation and improvement of 911 services statewide.

Thank you again for your consideration of Senate Bill 673 and the opportunity to submit testimony to the committee.

Very respectfully,

PAUL E. KNAPP  
Maj Gen, Wisconsin National Guard  
The Adjutant General