



**Testimony of
ANNISSA REED
CTIA**

**In Support of
Rhode Island House Bill 7087**

**Before the
Rhode Island House Corporations Committee**

February 27, 2024

On behalf of CTIA®, the trade association for the wireless communications industry, I submit this testimony in support of House Bill 7087, which would update existing tax, business registration, and other requirements that impede the ability of businesses to rapidly respond to a declared disaster or emergency. Thirty-three states have enacted similar legislation recognizing the need to ensure that wireless companies and utility companies can deploy personnel and resources into the state as quickly as possible to respond to the needs of our customers. In addition, the National Conference of State Legislatures has adopted this bill as model legislation, and the Multistate Tax Commission has endorsed this legislation.

Consumers have come to rely on wireless service in all aspects of life, particularly during disasters and emergencies. When such events occur, the wireless industry is committed to working with our federal, state, and local partners to ensure vital communication systems remain intact and service is rapidly restored. Due to the importance of wireless communications during disasters, the wireless industry needs the flexibility to bring out-of-state personnel and equipment to restore communications systems.



H.7087 includes important provisions that will facilitate the wireless industry's rapid response to disasters and emergencies. The legislation recognizes the temporary nature of a declared disaster and relaxes thresholds for establishing an in-state presence for employees and resources. For example, wireless providers need the flexibility to bring out-of-state employees into the state temporarily without having to subject those employees to state or local tax withholding or payments or subject them to state licensing or registration requirements during a declared disaster. Employees and employers will instead continue to be subject to taxes and other requirements in their home states during the declared disaster period.

In closing, the wireless industry respectfully urges passage of this important legislation. It will help accelerate disaster restoration efforts and get the state and its citizens on the road to recovery after disasters and emergencies.