

- October 30, 2009 Ackerman Secures Agreement to Replace Port Washington Police District's Broken Radio System
Congressman arranges for New York State officials to provide new frequency for department's emergency radio system U.S. Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-L.I./Queens) announced today that the Port Washington Police District's primary emergency radio system – which was knocked out of service in September – is one step closer towards being replaced. The breakdown of the radio system is presently jeopardizing public safety by forcing police officers in Port Washington to rely on their personal cell phones to communicate with each other and with emergency dispatchers. Although police officials have put a temporary backup radio system in place, it has proven to be unreliable due to high levels of static and interference. As a result of Ackerman's intervention, officials from New York State have agreed to provide the Port Washington Police with a new primary radio channel on which the district can operate. The state will make this channel available by relinquishing an unused 800 MHz frequency that is presently licensed to New York State. Ackerman had urged state officials to relinquish one of their vacant channels for the police district in a letter he sent this week to Dr. Melodie Mayberry-Stewart, the Chief Information Officer and Director of the New York State Office for Technology (the agency with jurisdiction over the issue). Ackerman, who initially contacted the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) about the problem, was directed to the state because New York State is currently licensed for 800 MHz channels and can relinquish them at its own discretion. Ackerman, whose Congressional district encompasses Port Washington, Long Island, intervened in the matter after officials from the Port Washington Police District requested his assistance. Under the agreement, the state will transfer an unused frequency at Republic Airport in Farmingdale, L.I. to the tower at Port Washington Police Headquarters. The move must be approved by the FCC, and the permanent allocation of the channel must be endorsed by New York metropolitan area's Regional Planning Committee. Ackerman was informed of the state's decision in a letter – a reply to his correspondence – from Dr. Mayberry-Stewart. "The provision of this new radio channel to the Port Washington Police District has eliminated a real threat to public safety" said Ackerman. "Police officers will once again communicate effectively, allowing them to properly protect the residents of Port Washington. We thank state officials for responding to our urgent request to remedy the critical problem. The Port Washington Police force includes 65 police officers and serves 25,000-30,000 residents on the Port Washington peninsula, as well as the thousands of individuals who work and visit the area. - News source - ackerman.house.gov