
RE: Legal Review Request: IPAWS Cross-Jurisdictional Memorandum of Understanding

From Hal Hawes <hal.hawes@wilcotx.gov>

Date Mon 6/29/2026 16:39

To Bruce Clements <bruce.clements@wilcotx.gov>

Cc Jacob Isbell <jacob.isbell@wilcotx.gov>; Sarah Canfield <sarah.canfield@wilcotx.gov>; Shannon Francis <shannon.francis@wilcotx.gov>; Hal Hawes <hal.hawes@wilcotx.gov>

 1 attachment (36 KB)

Draft - City of Austin - Williamson County IPAWS Cross Jurisdictional MOU Draft 7-1-26.docx;

Hey Bruce,

Other than revising the effective date to be a date after it is approved (currently highlighted in the MOU as July 1, 2026) and removing the watermark of "Draft", the MOU looks fine and you can proceed.

Thanks!

Hal C. Hawes
General Counsel
Williamson County Commissioners Court
1848 Texas Trail
Georgetown, Texas 78626-3149
Phone: (512) 943-3862
Email: hal.hawes@wilcotx.gov
<http://www.wilcotx.gov>

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From: Bruce Clements <bruce.clements@wilcotx.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2026 4:34 PM

To: Hal Hawes <hal.hawes@wilcotx.gov>; Shannon Francis <shannon.francis@wilcotx.gov>

Cc: Jacob Isbell <jacob.isbell@wilcotx.gov>; Sarah Canfield <sarah.canfield@wilcotx.gov>

Subject: Legal Review Request: IPAWS Cross-Jurisdictional Memorandum of Understanding

Good afternoon,

OEM is requesting a legal review of the attached Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Williamson County and the City of Austin regarding cross-jurisdictional use of FEMA's

Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). (More info may be found here: [Integrated Public Alert & Warning System | FEMA.gov](#))

Purpose of the MOU:

The agreement would allow either jurisdiction to issue IPAWS alerts (Wireless Emergency Alerts and Emergency Alert System messages) on behalf of the other jurisdiction when requested and authorized by the affected jurisdiction. This is intended to provide continuity of alerting capability in the event a jurisdiction is unable to send emergency alerts through its own IPAWS systems.

Under the MOU:

- Neither party has independent authority to issue alerts on behalf of the other.
- Alerts may only be issued when expressly requested by the affected jurisdiction.
- The requesting jurisdiction provides the message content, activation area, duration, and incident point of contact.
- The assisting jurisdiction serves as a backup alerting authority and transmits the message through IPAWS.
- The agreement includes notification, coordination, review, amendment, and termination procedures.
- The agreement must be approved by the Texas State Alerting Official and maintained in accordance with FEMA IPAWS requirements.

This MOU was drafted by the City of Austin, I am not sure if this should be structured as an MOU, Interlocal Agreement (ILA), or some other document type. I am also not clear on whether the liability and risk allocation provisions are adequate or if the signature authority identified in the agreement is appropriate.

The benefit of this MOU: It will support emergency warning and notification continuity between neighboring jurisdictions and enhance resilience of public alerting capabilities during emergencies. There are few individuals in either or any other jurisdiction with the proper authorization and training to send these messages and having back-up capability is critical.

Thank you for your consideration,
Bruce



Bruce Clements

Director, Office of Emergency Management

office: 512.864.8267 | cell: 512.591.4973

Bruce.Clements@wilcotx.gov

911 Tracy Chambers Ln

Georgetown, TX 78626

www.wilcotx.gov