

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Sept. 26, 2019
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Commissioner Hall issues statement about latest cellphone jamming test

JACKSON, MISS. –Mississippi Department of Corrections Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said hearing about “the promising results” of a test of jamming technology at a South Carolina prison reaffirms her support for cellphone jamming systems.

The U.S. Department of Justice issued a news release Wednesday about a report from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) regarding the results of the pilot test in Columbia, S.C.

“The results are promising, showing that the new technology could be effective in preventing the use of contraband cellphones in prisons,” the release states.

During testing, cell signals inside the tested area “were blocked, while legitimate calls could be made” outside the testing perimeter. This is exactly the type of technology the correctional industry needs to combat the issue of contraband cell phones, Commissioner Hall said.

As an active member of the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA), Commissioner Hall supports legislation before Congress to allow cellphone jamming in correctional facilities. She is among a select group of correctional leaders working closely with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association (CTIA) on addressing contraband cellphones.

“It is widely known that cellphones in prisons is a daily problem for the correctional industry and pose a true risk to public safety,” Commissioner Hall said. “The MDOC is not immune, and we recognize that even with a Managed Access System (MAS), finding and confiscating an abundance of cellphones tells us that something is not

working. We need a reliable and cost-efficient solution. We don't ever want to jeopardize public safety as we try to get a handle on this epidemic.”

While several tools, including shakedowns, body scanners, mobile cell phone detectors, wands, cellphone K-9s, and netting, are being used to address contraband cellphones, micro-jamming appears to be another proactive approach that must be fully explored, Commissioner Hall said.