

Members of the Public Safety Committee.

My name is Ernest Herrick, Chairperson of the 911 Commission.

I speak in opposition to Raised Bill 312, An Act Mandating the Regionalization of Public Safety Emergency Telecommunication Centers.

I and the 911 Commission are strongly in favor of regionalization and promoted it over the years. Funding is available through the 911 fund, administered by The Dept. of Public Safety, Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications, so that municipalities may perform studies to determine if regionalizing is cost effective for them. There have been a number of studies done over the last few years. When it comes down to signing, one or more of the parties involved will not sign for a number of reasons.

It's my strong feeling that Raised Bill 312 is not the way to go to promote regionalization. This needs to be studied to be sure that whatever is decided will be in the best interest of the people of our State. Not funding existing PSAPs if they don't regionalize is not the way to do it.

Think about this. The way existing legislation is written, each phone bill has an assessment on it for the 911 Emergency System. As I understand Raised Bill 312, this assessment is still in place. If this is the intent that PSAPs would not get funding if they did not regionalize by 2013, the phone bills in these towns would still be assessed the Sur-charge for 911 on their phone bill without any benefit.

In closing, I'm not against regionalization. It's proven that it will save municipalities money however it's needs to be done correctly. That's why there should be a study to make sure we make it fair and equitable for each municipality.

Thank you for allowing me the time. I will answer any questions you may have.