

Public Safety Committee Of The CT. Legislature

Senate Bill 1017

February 22, 2011

Thank you Chairman or Madam Chair

12

My name is Daniel S. Warzoha Chairman Of The Region 1 Emergency Planning Team. On behalf of the Region 1 Emergency Planning Team, and The Bridgeport, Norwalk and Stamford UASI . I thank you for the opportunity to address Senate Bill 1017 which would consolidate DEMHS into DPS.

The 14 Cities and Towns that I am representing are keenly aware of the financial challenges facing this great State. All 14 of us wish to be part of the solution not part of the problem. We are encouraged that both the Governor and the Legislature are engaged in meaningful dialogue to provide solutions for our current and long term financial issues.

The ability to provide for the safety and security of our citizens is a primary tenet of government. This must be a major factor in any consideration of consolidation of State Departments or Agencies

DEMHS was created by this body to meet the needs and challenges of the post 9/11 world. Its mission and doctrine of an all hazards operational Department have provided the citizens of this State with tremendous value. One only has to look back at last March's weather events combined with the never ending Winter of 2011 for an example of the term " Best Practices " for a State Department. DEMHS is also in the unique position of providing excellent fiscal value to all our Cities, Towns and Tribal Nations. The ratio of providing \$ 8.00 Federal Dollars for every \$ 1.00 State Dollar . The funds that are received through the DEMHS Grants Unit. are programmed to be down

risks using the 5 Regional Planning Teams. This funding has been used for Strategic planning, road maps for success, training, equipment purchases State wide for First responders of every discipline have been accomplished . While the continued buy down of risks are planned with much work still to be completed.

This dynamic process however ,will be compromised and stalled for an unknown period of time. The proposed consolidation will cause Federal Government Agencies who provide the different Grant Funding Streams to conduct a reprogramming process. This process includes but is not limited to defunding of all Grants, completed audits, new grant applications, new budgets, investment justifications , new accounts , policies and procedures coupled with complex Federal administrative hurdles. The best estimates of this period range from 6 – 18 Months.

The effect of an 18 Month delay would have a crippling effect on all 5 regional planning process's . The ongoing cooperation and collaboration programs would stall as well. It should be noted that while we would be inactive, those who are looking to capitalize on our funding streams will be aggressively going after them. Last week Rep Nita Lowey D – NY along with Rep. Steve Israel D – NY successfully amended an Anti Terrorism Bill in Congress that will strip all UASI funding from the 2 UASI regions in the State . The loss of over 5 Million Dollars for these programs will have a deep and profound impact .

As Regional Planning Chairman, my team and I are committed to work with all parties to advance the consolidation of State Departments and Agencies. We feel this Bill while starting the dialogue needs to be revisited . A new structure that would provide for both efficiency and the economy of scale . This plan would call for DEMHS to be the umbrella Department . Under

which would come the following groups. The Commission On Fire Prevention and Control, The State Fire Academy, OSET, OEMS, POST and The Office Of Education and Data Management from DPS. This level of consolidation would provide an efficient operating platform for all parties. Thank you for your time today and I stand ready for any questions you may have .