



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

February 28, 2013

Rep. Stephen Dargan, Co-Chairman
Sen. Joan Hartley, Co-Chairman
Public Safety and Security Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

**HB 6424 AN ACT CONCERNING FEES FOR SEARCHES OF ACCIDENT AND
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND
PUBLIC PROTECTION**

The Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection supports this bill.

"The reason for the proposed legislation is a trial court decision (CT Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection v. Freedom of Information Commission et al.) that would require the agency to make accident and investigative reports available for review without a search fee. This is likely to result in a large increase in requests for searches alone, creating an administrative burden on the agency and negatively impacting revenues. The search, review and redaction of such reports takes substantial staff time and also requires that copies be made for the purpose of making redactions. Records are redacted for reasons ranging from the identity of juveniles or sexual assault victims to protecting the privacy of the public. The \$16 search fee is the only compensation that the agency receives for the often substantial efforts that go into the release of an accident or investigative report. Last year, the Reports & Records Unit released 46,480 accident or investigative reports (20,916 by staff; the rest by a vendor upon payment of an additional fee).

The unfortunate result of this decision is that unlimited demands to 'inspect' reports of this agency can be made without any cost to the demanding party. Such unlimited and cost free access is beyond the resources of this agency and was surely not contemplated by the General Assembly in setting the agency's budget. Lastly, significant fiscal loss can result to the State of Connecticut from the inability to collect a statutory fee from anyone who requests to 'inspect' reports.

Sincerely,

Reuben F. Bradford
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