



Senator Timothy Larson, Co-Chair, Public Safety & Security Committee
Representative Stephen Dargan, Co-Chair, Public Safety & Security Committee
Senator Anthony Guglielmo, Ranking Member, Public Safety & Security Committee
Representative Lezlye Zupkus, Ranking Member, Public Safety & Security Committee
Members of the Public Safety & Security Committee

My name is Jeffrey Otto. I am President of Quinebaug Valley Emergency Communications, Inc. We operate one of the largest Regional 911 PSAPs in Connecticut. For forty-one years we have served 104,000 residents in sixteen towns, two Boroughs and a Fire District covering 530 square miles. I appear to urge support for a slight modification of **S.B. 1071**.

**Quinebaug Valley
Emergency
Communications, Inc.**

This Bill essentially aims to recast the name of the Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications to the Division of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications and also to add to the responsibilities of OSET the establishment, planning, coordination and implementation of the Next Generation 911 System in the state. As such the Bill appears to provide only updated nomenclature to be applied to existing operations of OSET. Since OSET has been identifying itself as DSET for over three years, it is high time that the statutes reflect the manner in which the office has self-identified.

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With respect to the NG911 system, the text of the Bill does not make clear that it is the intention of OSET operate as the carrier of digital 911 traffic over optical fiber and other electronic devices owned or leased for a long term by the state as opposed to its current mode of operation in which all such carrier services are purchased from outside organizations. OSET has planned to operate in this fashion for four or more years and has dedicated considerable resources to effect such a plan, often to the detriment of its other responsibilities. The planned methodology brings to the state substantial additional responsibilities and potential liabilities without making them clear to the Legislature in this Bill or elsewhere.

While we support fully Connecticut's preparation for and participation in the national NG911 system, we suggest that the current Bill be revised to make clear OSET's role as a carrier of digital emergency traffic, and to explicitly seek the support of the Legislature in broadening its role and expanding the liability exposure of the state in this matter. It would also seem prudent that the appropriate officials be chided for failing to seek legislative approval for expansion of OSET's mission and altering its identity until years after it undertook these changes.

It has been evident to the Legislature since at least 1996 that the largest problem facing Connecticut's 911 system, a system that once lead the nation, is the excessive number of PSAPs in the state. Connecticut operates more PSAPs per capita than any other state. Only 12% of those operations receive more than four 911 calls per hour; 51% receive fewer than one call per hour. Many PSAPs do not warrant stand-alone facilities. Yet OSET, the agency responsible for regulating and promoting 911 services, has undertaken no persistent or effective efforts to reduce the excessive number of PSAPs, despite the fact that they have said that they recognize this situation as a problem. Connecticut is out of touch with the nation in this matter, and the FCC is about to launch an initiative to greatly reduce the number of PSAPs in the nation as part of the NG911 system. OSET employed a consultant in 2011 to recommend a means of consolidating these operations. From the consultant's point of view radical consolidation is feasible, but OSET has decided to again do nothing in the face of this problem. Instead they have proposed a smoke-screen subsidy revision scheme that would reduce subsidies to the three largest regional PSAPs, increase subsidies to smaller, less efficient PSAPs and drastically reduce subsidies to large cities should they attempt to consolidate.

We submit that under these circumstances it would be appropriate to add to the Section 1 responsibilities of the Agency an explicit statement of its responsibility to effect reduction of the number of PSAPs. For now, charging them with the responsibility of implementing the consolidations required by H.B. 6970 would be a good starting point.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed legislation.