



TOWN OF EAST HADDAM EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

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March 10, 2015

DSET Docket No. 13-01
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection
Division of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications
1111 Country Club Road
Middletown, CT 06457

RE: DSET Docket No. 13-01

To whom it may concern:

We appreciate the opportunity to comment in strong support of the proposed changes to regulations pertaining to the funding of regional public safety answering points.

The Town of East Haddam has been served by Colchester Emergency Communications (KX) for many years. Over the past few years KX has found themselves in financial hardship, causing them to significantly increase the annual cost to the communities they serve. Additionally, this financial hardship has limited KX's ability to support capital projects. The discussion of the funding inequity between centers has been a critical concern for several years within the KX towns and clearly one of the major causes of the financial issues that have come upon KX.

On the west side of East Haddam, Valley Shore Communications (VS) services all of the local municipalities. VS like KX has been greatly affected by the funding formula and VS Towns have been having very similar funding discussions as the KX Towns. Valley Shore and KX have both been in place for decades and have continued to provide excellent service to their communities.

The ability to have these two regional centers in place has allowed for not only excellent everyday coverage but the ability to have reliable "local" backup by another center where the dispatchers know the area. This may not seem that important but with the CT River dividing Middlesex County, the ongoing mechanical issues with the East Haddam Swing Bridge and multiple jurisdictional responses to issues on the Connecticut River itself, this local knowledge becomes extremely important for effective interoperability.

The findings of the 2011 L.R. Kimball consulting study showed there to be irrefutable funding disparities between regional dispatch centers. Examples set forth in DSET's NPRC document, including the proposed regulation, point out that centers with nearly equal populations can

receive vastly different funding (see Docket page 4, Item 15 – \$300,000 variance). This imbalance creates vastly different percentages of support to nearly equal operating budgets (see Docket page 5, figure A – 76%-11.9% variance).

As noted earlier, the underfunded centers such as KX and VS are forced to rely on their municipal members by increasing annual cost and in addition have been forced to greatly limit capital improvements. This forced reduction of technical improvements has the ability to have a daily impact on the delivery of services to emergency service responders, and ultimately those Connecticut Residents in our area that have called 911 for assistance.

In closing, we strongly urge that this regulation be moved to the Regulatory Committee unchanged. In today's economy, we completely understand that no municipality wants to be hit with any additional financial burden. With that said, we also strongly believe that it is only right that the funding for the Regional Dispatch Centers be address and allow for an equitable formula for all the residents of the State of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Mansfield". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "C" and "M".

Craig Mansfield – Director of Emergency Management
Town of East Haddam