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DSET Docket 13-01
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection
Division of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications
1111 Country Club Road
Middletown, Connecticut 06457

Re: DSET Docket 13-01

To Whom It May Concern:

Nearly twenty-five years ago, the state of Connecticut Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications released a strategy that called for the regionalization of the Public Safety Answering Points (Dispatch Centers) in the state. The belief was that a consolidation of these centers would not only bring financial savings but also increase the efficiency of the PSAPs which would in turn provide a higher level of services to the residents and visitors of the state.

In order to drive the pursuit of consolidated regional PSAPs, the OSET (now DSET) constructed a funding formula that gave subsidy to the regional centers which resulted in lower costs to the municipalities that chose to regionalize. Additionally, capital grants were offered to the regional PSAPs as a way to insure critical infrastructure and equipment could be kept up to date. As a result of a belief in the state strategy, combined with the efficiency and cost savings, 20 towns in the Northwest corner of Connecticut have joined to form a regional Dispatch Center (Litchfield County Dispatch).

In 2009 the City of Torrington decided that it would consolidate their Police, Fire and EMS dispatching becoming a member of Litchfield County Dispatch. The City has been working on many fronts in the collaborating of resources through a regional approach. Throughout the two year transition process in which the City of Torrington built a facility, which has become the new home of Litchfield County Dispatch, in collaboration with many partners which included officials from OSET (now DSET). During the time of this transition Litchfield County Dispatch was looked upon as the model of what the State of Connecticut was looking for in the consolidation of PSAP's statewide.

In 2014, without reasonable explanation, the State Department of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications announced that they were proposing a change in the funding formula that determines the subsidies to the regional dispatch centers. The current formula uses number of municipalities served, population, and call volume to determine the subsidy. The proposal was to eliminate the number of municipalities served element and base the funding solely on the number of 911 calls received by each regional center and the population they serve. Because of the small rural towns served by Litchfield County Dispatch,

this new formula would cause a significant reduction in state subsidy that will result in significant additional costs to each of the 20 municipalities LCD serves. This proposed formula seems to deviate from the strategy as it does not support continued regionalization efforts.

Additionally, the new formula is not meant to be a cost-saving initiative, but mere a re-allocation of funds from the three larger regional PSAPs to the three smaller. This is accomplished by removing the “number of municipalities served” from the formula. Again, contrary to the strategy the new formula focuses only on population and number of 911 emergency calls received by the PSAP. There is a significant flaw in this calculation because it does not consider the total volume of calls for service into the PSAP. The workload of a regional dispatch center is not solely determined by the 911 call volume or the population. LCD receives 30,000 911 calls annually. Litchfield County Dispatch receives approximately 80,000 calls for service on ten-digit lines into the center. This heavy call volume is a result of dispatching a municipal police department (Torrington) and is not considered in the new formula. These calls need to be included in the calculation of call volume.

In closing, the current proposal will cause significant hardship on our municipal budget in an already difficult time. If the change in the formula stays as proposed the City of Torrington would see an increase in costs for service by approximately \$130,000.00. I have been involved with many regional initiatives and believe in this strategy. I would hope that if the formula change stays as proposed that the City of Torrington would not have to look at other more cost effective opportunities. I do not support this proposal and hope you will work with us to re-evaluate making proper adjustments to insure the subsidy formula is fair for all municipalities and it is more aligned with the state regionalization strategy.

Respectfully,

Gary Brunoli
Chief of Fire Services/Emergency Management Director
City of Torrington