



Comments Pertaining to Vermont Senate Bill DR 23-0775

Televate, LLC
1934 Old Gallows Road
Suite 350
Vienna, VA 22182

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703-639-4200
www.televate.com

TELEVATE BACKGROUND

Founded in 2001, Televate is a leading public safety technology and engineering consultancy delivering sustainable, interoperable land mobile radio, wireless broadband networks and applications, dispatch and Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), and information technology and communications solutions to power mission critical requirements.

As a champion of public safety communications for over 22 years, Televate’s engineers and program managers are not just radio and IT technology experts—we are advocates for public safety who have dedicated much of our careers to enhancing interoperable voice and data networks for communities often underserved by technological advancement and budgetary funding. Formed as a Virginia limited liability company and headquartered in Vienna, Virginia, Televate has been primarily engaged in public safety communications but also provides wireless communication system support for commercial and other private wireless systems. We continue to work as a liaison between the public safety community and the legislative bodies that govern them to ensure that the needs and concerns of public safety are voiced and addressed.

Televate understands the issues impacting our nation’s critical communications and data sharing systems, and successfully designs and manages programs targeting these issues. We excel in the assessment, design, and development of sophisticated interoperable systems and manage implementations to ensure the operational continuity of these networks and systems. We also provide a host of specialized technical and programmatic management consulting services, including Multi-Agency/Jurisdiction System Ownership/Governance, Communications Planning, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), Concept of Operations, and Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) development to the public safety and critical infrastructure community.

TELEVATE’S SUPPORT OF PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS IN VERMONT

Televate has extensive experience supporting public safety communications in the State of Vermont. Televate has worked with the Vermont Department of Public Safety and the Vermont Public Safety Broadband Commission on the State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP) projects focused on evaluating public safety broadband coverage and FirstNet’s offerings. Additionally, we have been honored to support the Central Vermont region by performing a telecommunications needs assessment and providing a report that documented the status of the existing public safety communications systems, identified gaps in these systems, and provided recommendations to upgrade the systems to meet end user requirements. Currently, we are engaged with the Cities of Barre and Montpelier to perform an analysis of their dispatch facilities.

TELEVATE’S COMMENTS PERTAINING TO VERMONT SENATE BILL DR 23-0775

Televate has reviewed the draft bill DR 23-0775 and appreciates the opportunity to provide comments. Importantly, we support the key objective of the bill, which is the development and implementation of regional dispatch centers. Televate has seen this model work successfully to provide the public with consistent and reliable access to emergency services in other states and we believe it can be beneficial to the citizens of Vermont as well.


In our opinion, one key to the success of this approach will be to establish technical and training standards to ensure best practices are followed throughout the State. Televate's recent experience within the Central Vermont area indicates that variations in dispatch service exist depending on the center receiving the call and the dispatcher handling the call. As a result, Televate is convinced there is opportunity to improve service through standardized processes and consistent training practices. Furthermore, the implementation of a statewide Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system to facilitate the transfer of key call information in a timely manner would greatly improve emergency response time and consistency as well. In our opinion, the lack of a true CAD system in the dispatch facilities we have seen is a glaring omission and one that we highly recommended filling.

Televate would also like to point out that, while not specifically a focus of the bill in question, the communications systems, and particularly the Land Mobile Radio systems used to dispatch first responders, also have a significantly impact on the dispatchers' ability to perform their job, and on the service received. In some cases, antiquated and inadequate systems result in communications difficulties between the dispatchers and first responders, leading to delays in service, and potential compromises in first responder safety. The effect of these systems on dispatch service and local, regional, and statewide interoperability should not be overlooked.

It is clear that the items discussed here and, in the bill, will also require a different funding model and likely increases in funding as well. Today, dispatch centers in Vermont do not receive any funding from the 9-1-1 fees collected, or from the State. This approach differs from those Televate has witnessed in other states. Today, dispatch centers in Vermont compete with one another for dispatch customers and commonly find themselves struggling to find sufficient budget for their staffing and training needs. This contributes to inconsistent and sometimes sub-standard service. Therefore, Televate's opinion is that the establishment of an equitable and sustainable funding model to support the regional dispatch centers is also key to meeting the objectives of the legislation.

In conclusion, Televate supports the bill and its objectives to improve dispatch service throughout the State of Vermont. We are thankful for the opportunity to provide these comments and hope that they are helpful for the Senate's further deliberation. Please feel to contact us if you have questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,



A. Richard Burke
Managing Partner, Televate, LLC
1934 Old Gallows Road, Suite 350
Vienna, VA 22182
703-639-4201
rburke@televate.com



Dominick Arcuri
Subject Matter Expert, Televate, LLC
1934 Old Gallows Road, Suite 350
Vienna, VA 22182
804-986-7884
darcuri@televate.com