

Jeanette White
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Written Testimony on Regional Dispatch

Honorable Committee Members,

I would like to give a non expert's opinion on the issue of regional dispatch. This is an issue that have plagued the state for the last 40 years. Taking positive steps is a great start.

I am far from an expert in this area and you will hear from others much smarter than me but I will put in a few non-tech thoughts.

Part of the dilemma in solving the issue is the conflict between state control and local control. Also that there is confusion around the difference between call taking and dispatch - hence the discussion of one step or two step. There needs to be recognition and understanding of these before there can be a solution. There are many other complicating factors that involve the technology, etc but will leave those up to others to discuss. And then of course the issue that some areas pay for dispatch, others do not. And as we know, there is nothing better than free.

First I believe there must be planning both at the state and regional.local levels. Some areas have done this, not all. The planning must include:

- 1)an inventory of the current systems - the equipment, towers, etc and how interoperable they are;
- 2)who are the players that will need access and will sue it - law enforcement, fire, EMS, cell phone users;
- 3)where are the dead zones;
- 3)who is currently providing dispatch, for whom and how is it funded;
- 4)what are the current governance structures

In terms of what we need to address and some goals:

- 1) how do we assure that all users have access
- 2) make sure that all systems can work together (interoperability, redundancy)
- 3)are the systems sustainable - resiliency
- 4)governance structures
 - a) need a statewide structure that sets standards - including for regional governance structures awards grants, oversees the sustainability of the system,.
 - b) regional governance structure - each region may have differences but they ned to meet minimum standards - e.g. ;how are serviced communities represented, how to insure the long life as changes may be made in administration, etc.

So it is wise to do planning before spending the money. And there needs to be assurance that regions are meeting the standards before they receive grants.

The goal is a system that works for all Vermonters. Equal access and fair to all.