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**STATE OF VERMONT**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S ATTORNEYS & SHERIFFS

MEMORANDUM

To: House Appropriations Committee  
From: Bram Kranichfeld, State's Attorneys & Sheriffs Dept.  
Date: February 21, 2014  
Re: Local Support for Special Investigative Units

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You asked for information regarding local support for the Special Investigative Units ("SIU's"). We requested input from the SIU's regarding how they solicit support from their local communities and what kinds of feedback they receive. Their responses are summarized below.

**A. The SIU's solicit local support in a variety of ways.**

The Bennington, Chittenden, Franklin, Lamoille, and Washington SIU's report soliciting towns directly for contributions. The remaining SIU's have relied upon general public/private fund-raising connected to public awareness efforts. Many SIU's report difficulties in obtaining the requisite voter support through petitions in order to be included in local budget proposals. The prevailing feedback from town officials is that the SIU's are already supported by tax-dollars and that they should not have to pay for a resource that they do not feel that they use. The Rutland and Bennington SIU's noted that prior efforts to solicit funding from towns was so unsuccessful that they have focused on general public fund-raising efforts as a more productive method. A number of the SIUs are still developing name recognition within their respective communities and hope to expand solicitations among their towns. Faced with too many service providers seeking too few dollars, a small number of SIUs have deferred to other non-profit service providers in seeking funding from their communities.

**B. Local communities that provide support do so at different levels.**

In those counties that have succeeded in being placed on budget ballots, the range of success is in the area of 50% - 73% of local communities contributing. Chittenden and Lamoille counties have used proportional requests (based upon population or service numbers), while Franklin county has used a flat rate request of \$1000 per community. Community contributions range from a couple of hundred dollars to full funding requests, but none of the counties receive funding from every community within their county. Some communities provide in-kind services

as contributions. Although these communities do not provide funding, they do provide a share of services to support the SIU.

**C. The SIU's have encountered some difficulties in obtaining local financial support**

The responding SIU directors echoed similar experiences regarding their community solicitations. Often, the local communities simply do not see the need for providing financial support due to the perception of a lack of offenses in the community and the belief that they already pay for the combined services through existing taxes. Another important reason is that the local communities are too financially strapped themselves. Private fund-raising has been more successful in a number of the counties, but those funding sources are limited in consistency and sustainability. Most directors noted the difficulty in even getting onto the ballot for funding consideration due to strenuous voter petition requirements. To organize and execute the necessary effort to fulfill the petition requirements, most of the SIUs would need additional staff, which is presently not a practical consideration. The SIUs continue to work on making their presence and value known within their communities, but they are still relative newcomers in most counties.