



March 18, 2015

Hon. Donna Sweaney, Chair
House Government Operations Committee
Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Dear Chairperson Sweaney,

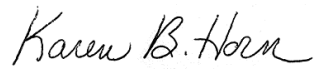
Thank you for hosting the hearing on closing the Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) on March 17.

On February 5, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns Board of Directors voted unanimously to oppose the closing of PSAPs in Rutland and Derby for many of the reasons that were cited at the hearing. Rutland and Derby are two municipalities that have been hard hit by Vermont's lagging economy. Ensuring the public safety of Vermont citizens is one of the primary functions of state government.

We believe that closing these two PSAPs will both hurt the economy by removing stable, middle-income jobs from those areas and compromise the public safety and delivery of all emergency services to those areas. As you heard Monday evening, the number of dispatchers statewide would be reduced, the territory for which they would be responsible would increase, and the default requirement to handle rollover calls at four municipal and county PSAPs would increase. Testimony presented to your committee indicated that, upon consolidation, the Williston PSAP would be responsible for dispatching to almost 57 percent of Vermont's land area, which includes 63 percent of its population. Without specific knowledge of the areas to which they would be dispatching, the likelihood of mis-direction increases significantly.

We urge you to consider the whole range of impacts to the Northeast Kingdom and in the Rutland area and to keep the Derby and Rutland PSAPs open.

Sincerely,


Karen B. Horn, Director
Public Policy and Advocacy

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