

**From:** Sarah Copen <[sarah.copen@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.copen@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** March 18, 2015 at 10:44:52 PM EDT  
**To:** [dsweaney@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:dsweaney@leg.state.vt.us)  
**Subject:** PSAP Consolidation

Madam Chairman,

First I would like to extend my gratitude for your involvement with the public hearing that was held on March 17, 2015. I can think of no greater way to see our democracy at work than those few hours in the Statehouse on Tuesday.

I am hoping to have few more moments of your time and expand upon a key component of this consolidation.

I am employed in the Williston PSAP and while many will say my job is secure, why am I even involved with this, I will answer you this, I no longer feel that my job is secure as there has been such lengths taken by the administration to avoid transparency that truly no one knows what the proverbial end game really will be.

I started here in July of 2007. At that time the PSAP's were in the process of creating Emergency Communications Dispatcher I (paygrade 19) and Emergency Communications Dispatcher II (paygrade 21). Both will be referred as ECD's in future context. The primary difference between the two levels is the key component of training. I have prided myself in my career with Department of Public Safety as becoming a go to trainer on my shift (which is evenings, 1500-2300 hours).

In my time here at Williston I have been involved with training nine people. Please keep in mind I didn't start training until 2009. Out of those nine people only two are still employed with the department. Two of the nine people presented risks to the officers and their employment was terminated. Some have gone to become officers and others have parted ways with public safety all together.

Our training is long and our training is intense but it is the only way to ensure safety to all first responders in Vermont. The largest concern I have over this proposal is the fact that those who don't actively do this job, day in - day out are making choices that will greatly impact those of us that do and in a negative manner with no regard.

The proposed consolidation would require Williston to hire an additional eight employees. We currently have two vacancies in addition to these new positions. The desire from command staff is to "fast track" the training and get bodies in chairs. I recently proposed a question to command staff if they were willing to reduce the academy by 2/3 and still feel right about those they put on the streets and no one answered. Not only can our training not be reduced and still remain effective but there are staffing limitations that would prevent us from training that large of a number all at once as well.

I fully respect the difficult situation the State and the Legislator's are in with regard to our budget but I am asking you to pause for a moment and determine what a life is worth, as the 1.7 million - which I know is no small amount, equals about \$2.74 a full time resident and I surely hope we all value our lives much greater than that.

I thank you again for your time, please if you have questions I can assist with please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Sincerely,

Sarah Copen