

Sarah Copen
Emergency Communications Dispatcher
Williston PSAP
[\(802\) 233-6239](tel:(802)233-6239)
Sarah.Copen@gmail.com

My name is Sarah Copen and while I am here today as a concerned citizen of Vermont, I would also like to state that I am a dispatcher in the Williston PSAP where I have been employed since July of 2007.

You will hear from many people today about the concern over the proposed closure of two of the four state operated PSAPS and before I continue I want to take a moment and thank you all for the opportunity to speak here today.

Liability is defined as something that is a hindrance or puts an individual or group at a disadvantage, or something that someone is responsible for, or something that increases the chance of something occurring (i.e. it is a cause).

For purposes of this conversation today I will be focusing on the later part of the definition; something that increases the chance of something occurring.

Where I work in Williston I am responsible for knowing and on many levels being an expert on the following things. Six counties that adds up to 3,358 square miles of land. In those counties a population of 328,118 people and approximately 250 emergency responders who work for the various departments we dispatch for.

This proposed consolidation would combine the Derby PSAP with Williston PSAP and it would be an additional 2,053 square miles, an additional 64,537 people and approximately 500 first responders.

So that we are all on the same page the numbers based on land and population are based on 2013 statistics and are based on the total land area in Vermont being 9,620 square miles and the total population being 626,562.

The proposed consolidation of Williston and Derby would result in one PSAP being responsible for nearly 57% of the state's land mass and nearly 63% of the state's population. All of this with just an additional 8 employees, many that means just one more person on a shift?

Now I have been scratching my head since the Governor's address in January mentioned these changes and now just saying those numbers out loud I find myself in even greater disbelief as to how it can be done.

The increased responsibility: in area coverage, in population and in first responders (police, fire and rescue) with such minimal staffing will, in my personal opinion, jeopardize public safety.

I would like to leave you with this thought;

“There are risks and costs to action. But they are far less than the long range risks of comfortable inaction.” – John F. Kennedy

Thank you in advance,

Sarah Copen