

1 **Draft Proposal from the House Committee on Government Operations**
2 **and Military Affairs to the H.494 House Conferees**
3 **Concerning Secs. C.112 and C.113**
4

5 Sec. C.112 PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM;

6 DISPATCH; INVENTORY; DESIGN

7 (a) The General Assembly finds that protecting public safety and welfare is
8 an essential function of State government and it is in the public interest to
9 establish a statewide reliable, secure, and interoperable public safety
10 communications system, comprising integrated 911 call-taking and regional
11 dispatch systems, and to ensure that the system is equitably and sustainably
12 financed and universally accessible by all persons throughout the State.

13 (b) It is not the intent of the General Assembly to establish a public safety
14 communications system that disrupts or in any way jeopardizes the exceptional
15 dispatch services currently in place or the existing 911 system, but rather to
16 support, enhance, strengthen and build upon those efforts and initiatives.

17 (c) The transition to a public safety communications system as specified in
18 subsection (a) of this section shall be overseen and managed by the Enhanced
19 911 Commissioner, in consultation with the Commissioner of Public Safety,
20 the Secretary of Digital Services, the Commissioner of Public Service, and
21 relevant State and local public safety and government stakeholders
22 Commissioner of Public Safety, in consultation with the Public Safety
23 Communications Steering Committee established in subsection (d) of this

1 section. In addition, the Board Commissioner is authorized to retain a project
2 manager and one or more additional consultants with relevant expertise in
3 public safety communications technology, design, and financing to assist with
4 the requirements of this section.

5 (d)(1) There is established a Public Safety Communications Steering
6 Committee to advise the Commissioner of Public Safety on all phases of the
7 development, design, and implementation of a statewide public safety
8 communications system, including with respect to the retention of a project
9 manager and any consultants, the development and review of preliminary and
10 final design plans, the transition and implementation process, and any
11 proposed pilot projects developed pursuant to subsection (f) of this section.

12 (2) The Steering Committee shall consist of seven members as follows:

13 (A) the Executive Director of the Enhanced 911 Board;

14 (B) the Secretary of Digital Services or designee;

15 (C) the Commissioner of Public Service or designee;

16 (D) one municipal officer appointed by the Executive Director of the
17 Vermont League of Cities and Towns;

18 (E) one representative from a public safety answering point overseen
19 by a municipal police department appointed by XXX;

20 (F) one firefighter, emergency medical technician, or paramedic
21 appointed by XXX; and

1 (G) the Chair of the Regional Dispatch Working Group established
2 by the General Assembly in Act 185 of 2022.

3 (3) At its initial organizational meeting the Steering Committee shall
4 elect from among its members a chair and vice chair. Meetings may be held at
5 the call of the Chair, at the request of two members, or at the request of the
6 Commissioner of Public Safety. A majority of sitting members shall constitute
7 a quorum, and action taken by the Committee may be authorized by a majority
8 of the members present and voting. Except for those members regularly
9 employed by the State, the compensation of the Committee's members is that
10 provided in 32 V.S.A. § 1010(a). All members, including members otherwise
11 regularly employed by the State, shall receive their actual and necessary
12 expenses when away from home or office upon their official duties pursuant to
13 this section.

14 (4) The Department of Public Safety shall provide the Steering
15 Committee with administrative services and support.

16 (5) All meetings of the Steering Committee shall be open to the public
17 and conducted in accordance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law. All
18 records of the Committee are subject to the Vermont Public Records Act.

19 (6) The Steering Committee shall cease to exist on July 1, 2029.

20 (e) The establishment of a statewide public safety communications system
21 shall occur in essentially three phases that include data collection and analysis,

1 design, and implementation. Certain aspects of each phase may occur
2 simultaneously as deemed appropriate by the Commissioner.

3 (1) Data collection and analysis. On or before January 15 December 1,
4 2024, the Commissioner shall conduct a complete inventory and assessment of
5 all aspects of dispatch service currently provided in Vermont and, to the extent
6 possible, dispatch service currently provided outside Vermont for response
7 agencies located in Vermont, which shall include:

8 (A) an inventory of all existing dispatch infrastructure and
9 equipment, including facilities, hardware, software, applications, and land
10 mobile radio systems, referring to and incorporating any existing relevant data
11 collected by a State or municipal entity;

12 (B) the number of full-time and part-time personnel currently
13 performing dispatch service, taking into account personnel who have other
14 responsibilities in addition to providing dispatch service;

15 (C) the current total spending on dispatch service in Vermont, taking
16 into account that includes and itemizes for each municipality and dispatch
17 center all federal, State, and municipal appropriations and fees, every contract
18 for dispatch or first responder service, and projected budgets;

19 (D) in consultation with the Commissioner of Public Service and to
20 the extent feasible, identification of the communications dead zones in the
21 State, meaning those areas that lack the infrastructure to support public safety

1 land-mobile-radio communications or cellular voice and data service, or both,
2 and taking into consideration all cell towers that are part of the FirstNet
3 statewide public safety radio access network; cellular mapping efforts
4 conducted by the Department of Public Service; and any existing, relevant
5 mapping data collected by a dispatch center or other entity;

6 (E) with the assistance of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, a
7 needs assessment to determine where and to what extent there are gaps in
8 dispatch service or significant challenges to the delivery of dispatch service
9 and to identify those municipalities that are likely to be most affected by either
10 the curtailment of dispatch service from the two State-run public safety
11 answering points or from a new financing mechanism for the continuation of
12 such service;

13 (F) an assessment of the service provided by each dispatch center and
14 identification of particular challenges or vulnerabilities, if any, including with
15 regard to workforce, failover procedures, communications technology, costs,
16 and governance; and

17 (G) collection and assessment of any other information the
18 Commissioner deems relevant.

19 (2) Design. On or before January 15, 2024, the Commissioner shall
20 develop findings and recommendations related to draft elements of a
21 preliminary design for a public safety communications system, including

1 identification of ~~an~~ a proposed implementation timeline and any additional
2 data and resources needed to develop a final design on or before January 15,
3 2025. The final design shall include:

4 (A) technical and operational standards and protocols that ensure an
5 interoperable and resilient system that incorporates computer-aided dispatch
6 systems and land mobile radios;

7 (B) technology life cycle standards to ensure system and database
8 upgrades are timely, sufficiently financed, and properly managed;

9 (C) system and database security and cybersecurity standards;

10 (D) continuity of operations standards and best practices that
11 encompass failover procedures and other system redundancies to ensure the
12 continuous performance of mission-critical operations;

13 (E) workforce training standards and other staffing best practices that
14 support the retention and well-being of dispatch personnel;

15 (F) a resource allocation plan that ensures dispatch service is
16 available in all regions of the State, including the establishment of new
17 dispatch centers or expanded capacity and capability of existing dispatch
18 centers, if deemed appropriate by the Commissioner;

19 (G) a process for annually reviewing the budgets of dispatch centers;

20 (H) a recommended governance model to ensure effective State and
21 regional oversight, management, and continuous improvement of the system,

1 including identification of staffing or operational needs to support such
2 oversight and management of the system by the Board or by another State
3 agency, if deemed appropriate by the Board;

4 (I) cost estimates for implementing the system in Vermont, including
5 operational and capital costs;

6 (J) an overview of sustainable and equitable financing mechanisms,
7 taking into consideration:

8 (i) existing budgets for regional and local dispatch;

9 (ii) the population, grand list, and call volume of each
10 municipality;

11 (iii) existing and potential State funding streams;

12 (iv) available federal funding opportunities for public safety
13 agencies and emergency communications systems, including equipment,
14 network infrastructure, and services; and

15 (v) financing models adopted in other jurisdictions for public
16 safety communications systems; and

17 (K) any other standards or procedures deemed necessary or
18 appropriate by the Commissioner.

19 (f) If the Commissioner determines that sufficient minimum technical and
20 operational standards have been developed to warrant the funding of one or
21 more pilot projects in geographical areas of the State that presently face

1 significant challenges with respect to reliably providing dispatch service, the
2 Commissioner may submit a pilot project proposal to the Joint Fiscal
3 Committee in calendar year 2023. The proposal shall include a description of
4 each project, the resources needed, and an explanation of how the project will
5 align with, inform, and further the development of a statewide public safety
6 communications system. The Joint Fiscal Committee is authorized to approve
7 up to \$XXX for pilot projects authorized by this subsection.

8 (g) On or before January 15, 2024, the Commissioner shall submit a
9 progress report on the data collection and analysis required by subdivision
10 (e)(1) of this section, as well as the findings and recommendations required by
11 subdivision (e)(2) of this section in a written report to the Senate Committees
12 on Government Operations and on Finance and the House Committees on
13 Government Operations and Military Affairs, on Ways and Means, and on
14 Environment and Energy.

15 Sec. C.113. 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. B.1100 is amended to read:

16 Sec. B.1100 FISCAL YEAR 2023 ONE-TIME GENERAL FUND

17 APPROPRIATIONS

18 * * *

19 (b) \$11,000,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the
20 Department of Public Safety ~~Enhanced 911 Board~~ for regional dispatch
21 funding. The funds are subject to the following conditions:

1 (1) ~~\$4,500,000 shall be held in reserve until the report required by~~
2 ~~Sec. E.209.1 of this act is submitted and further approval to expend the funds is~~
3 ~~granted by the General Assembly~~ Up to \$2,000,000 shall be available for the
4 retention of technical experts to assist the Executive Director of the E-911
5 Board Commissioner with regional dispatch analysis and planning as required
6 by legislation enacted in 2023, Sec. C.112 of this act, and to fund the
7 administrative expenses incurred by the Public Safety Communications
8 Steering Committee established by Sec. C.112 of this act.

9 (2) ~~\$6,500,000 to provide grants to regional dispatch facilities upon~~
10 ~~approval of the Joint Fiscal Committee subsequent to review of a Regional~~
11 ~~Dispatch Facility grant plan submitted by the Commissioner of Public Safety.~~
12 ~~The plan shall include the extent to which federal funding sources may be~~
13 ~~available for regional dispatch~~ Up to \$XXX shall be available to provide
14 funding for pilot projects pursuant to Sec. C.112, subsection (f), of this act.

15 (3) ~~\$9,000,000 \$XXX shall be held in reserve until the report~~
16 ~~required by legislation enacted in 2023 is submitted and further~~ approval to
17 ~~expend the funds is granted by the General Assembly.~~

18 (4) It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Department of
19 Public Safety seek to draw and deploy the \$9,000,000 in Congressionally
20 Directed Spending to support Vermont’s transition to a modernized, regional
21 communications network in a manner that coordinates with and advances the

1 goals of the a statewide public safety communications system designed by the
2 E-911 Board. The Commissioner of Public Safety shall consult with the
3 Executive Director of the E-911 Board Public Safety Communications Steering
4 Committee as the federal parameters for expending the funds become available
5 and as the Commissioner develops a plan to expend such funds. In addition,
6 the Commissioner of Public Safety shall update the Joint Fiscal Committee on
7 planned expenditures.

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9 **Effective on passage.**