

February 11, 2021

Esteemed Chairs Horn and Bradley, Vice Chairs Osten and Paolillo,  
Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee:

The Western Connecticut Council of Government (WestCOG) appreciates the opportunity to comment on House Bill No. 6302, *An Act Concerning the Regionalization of Certain Public Safety Emergency Telecommunications Centers and a Study of Consolidation*.

The bill would require municipalities with populations less than 40,000 residents to consolidate into a regional public safety answering point (PSAP). WestCOG appreciates the bill's focus on regionalism and improved PSAP services, which is in line with WestCOG's current work. In 2020, WestCOG undertook a *Feasibility Study for the Sharing/Consolidation of Selected Public Safety Facilities and/or Services*, which specifically focused on PSAPs. To date, this project has produced two reports: first, an [evaluation of baseline public safety conditions in the region](#), and second, [recommendations about how to develop regional public safety services, specifically including PSAPs](#). Informed by these reports, WestCOG is developing Regional PSAP Implementation Plans in partnership with municipal and public safety leadership. The plans are for virtual and physical scenarios and consider the following communities:

- Group 1: Redding, Ridgefield, Wilton, Weston, New Canaan
- Group 2: Bethel, Brookfield, New Fairfield, New Milford, Danbury
- Group 3: Stamford, Darien

As WestCOG is a region where many of its member communities are operating individual PSAPs (15/18), we respectfully ask that Bill 6302:

1. Provides for virtual options, such as a shared, cloud-based Computer-Aided Dispatch and Records Management System (CAD/RMS).
2. Provides substantial incentives for regional systems and offer a voluntary buy-in solution for municipalities. The state could foster consolidation by offering investment if the municipality is moving to a consolidated model.
3. Defines clear goals for consolidation and performance metrics such as NG911 standards.
4. Considers standards for CAD/Mobile Systems. Most PSAPs in Connecticut use NextGen or Accucom. Neither of these is a Tier 1 or 2 CAD/mobile system. It should not be assumed that PSAPs can easily consolidate using existing platforms. A consolidation process should include an assessment of current CAD/Mobile systems and evaluate alternatives that may improve public safety operations.
5. Considers additional incentives for systems that integrate across multiple departments. Both police and fire CAD/RMS should be a component of a PSAP consolidation project.
6. Considers GIS/mapping standards. Modern CAD/mobile systems are GIS/mapping-based. Public safety-grade GIS data should meet NG911 GIS standards.

Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Francis R. Pickering". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent horizontal line underlining the name.

Francis R. Pickering  
Executive Director