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Testimony in support of Senate Bill 487
To the Senate Utilities Committee
February 20, 2024

Chairman Fagg, Vice-Chairman Petersen, and fellow Senate Utilities Committee Members:

I am pleased to testify before this committee in support of Senate Bill 487 authorizing counties to share services of 911 public safety answering points (PSAPs). This committee heard a presentation on the Audit of the Kansas 911 System published in December 2023 on behalf of the Legislative Division of Post Audit report. On Page 13 of that report there was the note that:

“The Kansas Hosted Call Handling System is ideally suited to support consolidation of PSAPs which would be transparent to the 911 caller. However, consolidation momentum has slowed since there is some uncertainty regarding future Council disbursements for 911 to consolidating jurisdictions. The Council has recognized the impact of these uncertainties and is forming a working group to assess potential solutions. This may be an area the Legislature could clarify in the Act.”

Senate Bill 487 clearly states that “A county may contract with another county for the provision of some or all of a county’s PSAPs” – some counties may want to contract for just night or weekend service – and adds the requirement that there be a contract or memorandum of agreement approved by the council that addresses contingency plans and overflow arrangements.

The Kansas 911 Act provides for distribution of funds collected through 911 fees; the committee might want to discuss how those funds should be distributed to counties that no longer have a PSAP within their county both because the funds have limited uses and because funds provided to counties that qualify for a minimum distribution come from a reduced distribution to more populous counties. All Kansas PSAPs could benefit from additional funding.

I also hope that the committee might consider amending the 911 Act to specifically include maintenance and updates for Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping – necessary for dispatching to work – and specifically disallow expenditures for radio towers – questionable.

The House is working on a more comprehensive change to the 911 Act in HB 2690. SB 487 can either stand on its own or provide suggestions to incorporate into HB 2690. I urge your support.

Marci Francisco