

362 MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
SENATE BOX 203020
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-3020
(717) 787-7428
FAX (717) 787-9242

22 DALLAS SHOPPING
CENTER
MEMORIAL HIGHWAY
DALLAS, PA 18612
(570) 675-3931
FAX (570) 674-5037
TOLL FREE (888) 736-1153

2512 ROUTE 6
HAWLEY, PA 18428
(570) 226-5960
FAX (570) 226-5964

lbaker@psen.gov
senatorbaker.com

STATE SENATOR
LISA BAKER
20TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT



Senate of Pennsylvania

June 1, 2020

COMMITTEES

JUDICIARY, CHAIR
LABOR & INDUSTRY, VICE CHAIR
AGING & YOUTH
COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY
CONSUMER PROTECTION &
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
VETERANS AFFAIRS & EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS

The Honorable David (Randy) Padfield
Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency
1310 Elmerton Avenue
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Dear Director Padfield:

As the 911 Advisory Board continues to evaluate changes to the 911 funding formula, I would like to voice my strong opposition to the current proposal. I believe I have a unique perspective on such matters, having previously served as the chair of the Senate Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee and a past member of the 911 Advisory Board.

Over the past 25 years, many proposals, ideas and technologies have changed the delivery of our 911 services across Pennsylvania. Given the numerous distinctive qualities and nuances of our state, change has been difficult to achieve and implement. The commonwealth is investing in and improving our 911 system through a collaborative effort by state and county officials alike. We all have a stake in improved outcomes. But I am concerned the new distribution would create insurmountable hurdles for the counties of northeastern Pennsylvania, which have been placed at a tremendous disadvantage. Eight of the ten counties will receive less funding, totaling a loss of almost \$3.2 million, with one county receiving a 50 percent reduction.

Additionally, our area faces several unique challenges that are not captured in this plan, such as the significant influx of population each summer. Studies have demonstrated increases of between 50 to 90 percent during the busy season. Given our proximity to the New York and New Jersey market, there is also a wage pressure applied to certain jobs including those in county government. This difference is admittedly difficult to measure in a uniform statewide formula, but it is real for these and likely other border counties.

While it is a laudable goal for state government to nurture consolidation and regionalization when it can sensibly be done, ideally this support is offered through incentives for local leaders to utilize. The topography of our region and other rural areas across the state has proven challenging to overcome when attempting essential communication connectivity. Instead of a forced financial reduction which *may* lead to regionalization, this goal should be tackled head-on in a targeted, county-by-county basis. If a streamlined, regional approach makes public safety and financial sense, stakeholders will support the plan.

I respectfully request that the 911 Advisory Board suspend implementation of this plan and reevaluate the matter, with the hope that further deliberation will lead to a fairer approach that does not jeopardize the viability of our current 911 services. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Baker".

Lisa Baker
Senator

pc: Pennsylvania 911 Advisory Board