



# REGIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE, INC.

275 Stratton Road  
Rutland, VT 05701

Business: 802-773-1746  
Emergency: 911  
FAX: 802-773-1717

State Senator Jeanette White  
State Senator Anthony Pollina  
Rep. Donna Sweaney  
Rep. Debbie Evans  
Vermont Statehouse-Committee on Government Operations  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633

March 16, 2015

Dear Honorable Members:

I am writing to you today regarding the proposed consolidation of 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPS) currently under consideration by the Vermont Department of Public Safety and Governor Shumlin. I regret that a work commitment prevents me from attending the committee session scheduled for March 17, 2015.

By way of introduction, I am a paramedic and the Training Coordinator for Regional Ambulance Service in Rutland, the state's busiest EMS only provider, answering almost 9,000 calls per year. I am a 35 year EMS veteran, and served for five years as the Lieutenant in command of the communication division for Volusia County (FL) EMS. I am also a past Senior National Faculty for the National Academy of Emergency Medical Dispatch (NAEMD), and have trained and implemented EMD in such places as Washington, D.C., Memphis, TN, and Melbourne, Australia. I also served on the NAEMD Curriculum Committee, and have contributed to the writing and editing of class materials and textbooks on the subject.

You will be hearing testimony from those of us opposed to this proposed consolidation on the grounds of the technology, geography, and impacts on the public safety infrastructure in the affected areas. These are all valid points in our view for your consideration, but I wish to talk to you about another, perhaps forgotten aspect: the people of 9-1-1.

The people I entrust my safety to every day are what we call "The Unrecognized Professionals" of public safety. In every city in the country, there are police officers, firefighters, and EMS providers who are recognized as professionals because of their training, their image to the public, and the services they provide---as well they should be. They perform duties in tense and dramatic situations. They wait in anticipation for situations to occur. They are well trained, dedicated, and ready to risk their lives for the preservation of public welfare, property, and the safety of the citizens.

When a problem does occur and a definite need arises for emergency services, simply pick up a telephone, dial 9-1-1 and reach—THE UNRECOGNIZED PROFESSIONAL—of the public safety and service structure. This is the person who must obtain enough information from the excited, sometimes hysterical, and often uninformed caller to properly and promptly send enough, and the right kind, or personnel and equipment to cope with the emergency situation which has arisen.

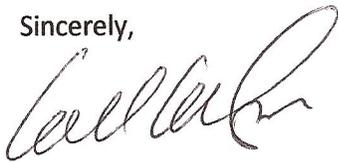
Call them communications officers, dispatchers, communication clerks, call taker, or whatever your classification is for the complaint taker. It should be recognized that these are the people who must decipher the garbled, the obscene, the dialects and accents, the misinformation, and on rare occasions, the perfectly clear but erroneous reports that demand an immediate response by emergency personnel and equipment. They, as often as not, are classified sometimes as “just” clerks, typists, and office help.

Before the first officer can be dispatched, the first fire truck alerted, or the first ambulance rolls tires, these professionals of 9-1-1 are on the scene...they are just there by remote control. They are the VERY first responders to our citizens, and the gate keeper of our public safety and health care systems. The State of Vermont has trained these professionals well, at considerable expense, and to think of them as “disposable” makes little sense to me. As a system, we perhaps need more of these professionals, not less.

To have them here locally, personally and professionally to me, is an investment. Not in dollars, but in my safety and well-being. Because of our existing relationships, they are totally invested in us as public safety providers, and we are likewise invested in the comfort that they “have our backs” before, during and after the response.

I urge you to carefully consider this proposed consolidation of PSAPS and its impact not at the dollars level, but at the people level. If possible, I respectfully request this letter be added to the record of the committee regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Mapes', written in a cursive style.

William Mapes, NRP, I/C.