

MARTHA'S VINEYARD

LAW ENFORCEMENT COUNCIL, INC.

Chief Randhi Belain
President



AQUINNAH
Randhi Belain
Chief of Police



CHILMARK
Sean Slavin
Chief of Police



DUKES COUNTY
Robert Ogden
Sheriff



EDGARTOWN
Bruce McNamee
Chief of Police



OAK BLUFFS
Jonathan Searle
Chief of Police



STATE POLICE
Sgt. David Mackin
Barracks Commander



TISBURY
Christopher Habekost
Chief of Police



WEST TISBURY
Matthew Mincone
Chief of Police

Docket#: D.T.C 23-3

October 4, 2023

Ms. Shonda D. Green, Secretary
Department of Telecommunications and Cable
1000 Washington Street, Suite 600
Boston, MA 02118

By Email to: shonda.green@mass.gov

Re: **Testimony in Support of Maintaining the Monthly Enhanced 911 Surcharge at \$1.50**

Dear Secretary Green:

This testimony is provided on behalf of the Martha's Vineyard law enforcement community in support of maintaining the monthly Enhanced 911 Surcharge at \$1.50 effective January 1, 2024. Any erosion of this revenue, as currently provided by D.T.C. 18-2, would adversely affect the grant funding, utilized by the Martha's Vineyard Public Safety Communication System, serving our Police, Fire and EMS departments, as well as many Public Service entities in Dukes County. These grants include Support and Incentive, Training, Emergency Medical Dispatch and Development Grant, which provided over \$1.8 million in FY23, and exceed \$2 million in FY24, to our service area. We, the members of the Martha's Vineyard Law Enforcement Council (MVLEC), representing all eight law enforcement agencies on Martha's Vineyard, fully understand The Dukes County Regional Emergency Communication Center and our municipalities served by these grants have come to rely on this funding to meet the training, operational and development needs and, in turn, public safety of the communities we serve.

Should the reduction from \$1.50 to \$1.00 took effect, the State 911 Department grant programs would be reduced by \$56.7 million in FY25 and \$70.5 million in both FY26 and FY27 from FY24 funding levels, as the Enhanced 911 Fund revenue erodes. Especially with the competitive application process for Development Grant funding, a drastically smaller pool of available fund would adversely affect our communities' ability to improve the Martha's Vineyard Public Safety Communication System further and eventually achieve true interoperability throughout the Commonwealth by integration into CoMIRS. Dukes County Sheriff's Office has been able to begin replacing a failing, aged, analog public safety radio system, serving approximately 20,000 year-round and over 200,000 summer residents in an isolated geographic location, accessible only by air and water. FY19-23 grant awards totaled \$7.15 million; however, remaining projects costs are projected at \$6.2 million; and any reduction in annual award levels would result in negative consequences for public safety communications.

For the aforementioned reasons, we strongly urge the Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Cable not to reduce the Enhanced 911 Surcharge from \$1.50 per month. We also endorse the September 1, 2023 petition from the State 911 Department for approval to maintain the monthly Enhanced 911 Surcharge at \$1.50.

Respectfully,

Chief Randhi Belain
Aquinnah Police Department

Chief Sean Slavin
Chilmark Police Department

Chief Bruce McNamee
Edgartown Police Department

Chief Jonathan Searle
Oak Bluffs Police Department

Chief Christopher Habekost
Tisbury Police Department

Chief Matthew Mincone
W. Tisbury Police Department