



SENATE OF PENNSYLVANIA BILL SUMMARY

Senate Bill 501 Printer's No. 0469

Prime Sponsor: Baker & Kearney
Committee: Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness

SYNOPSIS:

SB 501 would permit the establishment of Countywide Public Safety (EMS) Authorities.

SUMMARY:

The bill would amend Title 53 (Municipalities) by adding a new Section 5606.1 (Public Safety Authorities) as follows:

- *Defines "Public Safety Projects" as emergency medical services or services, including administrative support, coordination of service delivery and financing services related to EMS.
- *Authorizes the creation of a county authority for the purpose of public safety projects.
- *Permits counties to enter into an agreement to create a joint authority with the provision that no more than two authorities may be created within a county.
- *Requires counties to make a reasonable effort to include representatives of the municipalities the county serves in the governance structure of the public safety authority.
- *Stipulates that that a municipality's requirement under the laws of this Commonwealth to provide emergency services shall be satisfied by entering into a contract or agreement with a public safety authority under this section.
- *Permits municipalities within or adjoining a county where a public safety authority exists to contract with the authority.
- *Restricts public safety authorities from providing services or assessing rates or other charges without the municipality opting by ordinance to enter into a contract.
- *Stipulates that nothing in this subsection is intended to interfere with or relieve the dedicated emergency response organization from an obligation or commitment to respond to a dispatch from a public safety answering point or mutual aid system, or invoice and receive payment from an appropriate party for the services rendered.
- *Permits authorities to fix, alter, charge and collect rates and other charges for the services the authority provides, so long as the rates and charges are reasonable and uniform.
- *Provides that rate changes comply with public notice requirements.
- *Requires public safety authorities to comply with Section 5612 (relating to money of authority).
- *Permits the continuation of public safety authorities already in existence.
- *Requires the Department of Community & Economic Development - in conjunction with the Director of the Bureau of EMS in the Department of Health – to work with stakeholders to develop guidance and assistance for counties to create authorities and contract with educational and technical assistance providers to aid counties in starting and operating authorities.

*Permits municipalities to create a joint public safety authority if the county – by resolution – states that it does not intend to create a public safety authority or municipalities in the county petition the county via resolution to create a public safety authority and the county does not create a public safety authority within 120 days of receiving the petition.

*Stipulates that a public safety authority shall be a body corporate and politic and shall be for the purposes of financing working capital; acquiring, holding, constructing, financing, improving, maintaining and operating, owning or leasing, either in the capacity of lessor or lessee, projects and providing financing for insurance reserves.

*Extends the list of limitations to include public safety projects that support existing enterprises serving substantially the same purposes.

Effective Date: 60 days.

BILL HISTORY:

During the 2021-22 Session, this legislation was introduced as SB 698, which was referred to the Senate Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee.

Prepared by: N. Silcox 10/23/2023