

April 14, 2015

TO: Rep. Kevin Ryan, Chairman MORE Municipal Efficiencies Subcommittee

FROM: Gian-Carl Casa, Undersecretary for Legislative Affairs

RE: **Resident State Troopers**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the MORE Subcommittee's discussion about the Governor's proposal that towns with Resident State Troopers pay 100% of the costs associated with those troopers.

This proposal treats all municipalities equitably and offers several options to towns presently in the Resident State Trooper Program.

Background

Towns presently pay 70% of the costs and 100% for overtime.

Presently, 56 towns have Resident State Troopers. Of those towns, 22 have more than one Resident Trooper.

The proposed change generates \$4.6 million for the state budget in each year of the biennium.

Overall, the Governor's budget proposes that cities and towns receive \$4.9 Billion, in aid to cities and towns (including education aid, teachers retirements payments and school construction as well as formula grant programs.) Thus, this change affects less than one-tenth of one percent of aid provided to local governments in the budget.

Discussion

This year's budget has required that difficult choices be made. Overall, the Governor's budget spares municipalities the type of cuts that have had to be recommended for other programs.

Many municipalities pay 100% of the costs of full-time police departments. Their residents and businesses shoulder all the costs of not only wages, overtime and benefits but the infrastructure costs associated with full-time departments – for example police headquarters and lock-up, cruisers and other equipment, gasoline and more. These include many less-affluent communities and areas with higher crime rates than most small towns. In a tough budget year the Governor's proposal is a reasonable one that allows small towns to continue to avoid the kinds of expensive infrastructure and administrative costs paid by other municipalities.

At several points this session representatives of towns have argued that if they leave the resident trooper program the state would have to absorb the 70% the towns now pay. But if towns choose to no longer avail themselves of this program, their former resident state troopers would be available for full-time duty on patrol and other duties performed by the State Police, reducing the need for overtime by other troopers on those assignments.

At least one person has argued that that people in his community wrongly assume the presence of a state police barracks in his community is a “local department”. But certainly, having the barracks in town means faster response times and more deterrence than in towns that don’t.

Options

Under the Governor’s proposal towns presently in the program have several options. For example, they can:

- **Remain in the resident state trooper program and continue to benefit** by not having their own departments, for the reasons discussed above;
- **Rely on police barracks**, as many other towns do;
- **Create a local department**, as have many other municipalities.
- **Create a regional department**. This is an intriguing possibility. It may be a cost effective solution for many communities to pool their resources and employ a department that serves them all.

OPM has several programs to assist municipalities that wish to work together on regional solutions.

- The Regional Performance Incentive Grant is designed to encourage municipalities to jointly participate in projects that will produce measurable “economies of scale”.
- The Intertown Capital Equipment Grant provides grants for multi-municipal purchases of certain types of capital equipment.

Towns considering a change to a regional police department could and should avail themselves of these and other regional incentive programs. OPM is available to discuss the options with them.

Summary

Given today’s budget reality it is simply not possible to continue, without changes, every program the state provides. Towns in the Resident State Trooper program have several options and the ability to choose the alternative that best fits their needs.