



Office of the Sheriff

Commitment to Excellence



Dan Starry
County Sheriff

Douglas H. Anschutz
Chief Deputy

March 19, 2024

Public Safety and Finance Committee
MN House of Representatives
509 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Testimony for Minnesota House File 3699

Dear Chair Moller:

My name is Darlene Pankonie, I am the Emergency Communications Response Center Manager for the Washington County Sheriff's Office. I have worked in 911 for over 30 years and been a leader in the state for over 20 years. Thus, I am a core stakeholder and ardent advocate for Minnesota House File 3699, a piece of legislation that I have had the privilege to help shape and drive.

The journey to this moment has been fueled by a shared commitment to elevate those on the front line of public safety, those who answer the calls for help, the public safety telecommunicators. This bill represents a landmark effort in Minnesota to enhance training of public safety telecommunicators and to recognize them through certification.

My engagement with this training standard and certification for telecommunicators has afforded me the opportunity to connect with my peers across the state. This bill is the culmination of countless hours of dialogue, analysis, and collaboration among stakeholders from various sectors—all united by a common vision for supporting those who answer the 911 calls for help. Telecommunicators desire the knowledge to perform their best and for the recognition as a first responder.

The provisions of House File 3699 are designed to create a structure to offer the training that is needed and desired by those who oversee the 911 communications centers in Minnesota. It will be led by the stakeholders. They are the Sheriffs who oversee the majority of this critical communication with the collaboration of those who receive the critical services of the public safety telecommunicators. Law enforcement, fire services, emergency medical services, and all other emergency response agencies cannot do their jobs without the coordination from telecommunicators.

In my conversations with my colleagues across the state, I have been consistently reminded of the urgency and relevance of this legislation. I urge you to recognize the importance of this bill for our state's progress and well-being of public safety telecommunicators. By supporting Minnesota House File 3699, you will be endorsing a vision of that is both necessary and attainable.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dar Pankonie

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