

Joe Baldacci
Bangor
LD 756

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and distinguished member of the Joint Standing Committee on the Criminal Justice and Public Safety. I'm Senator Joe Baldacci and I represent Bangor and Hermon in the Maine State Legislature.

You've heard from several members of the Penobscot County delegation about the need for additional funding for Sheriff's deputies to handle rural patrol duties across Penobscot County. You've heard several folks explain the unique demographic and geographic characteristics of my home county, so I won't relay those statistics to you again. I will ask that you seriously consider this funding request as the abrupt change in rural patrol coverage in 2022 has left us without options in the middle of this budget cycle.

County government simply doesn't have an easy mechanism to deal with such an abrupt change in policy. As my brother Peter serves as a Penobscot County Commissioner, I can attest to the lean approach the County takes to their budget and can assure you that they simply don't have an extra million or so dollar in the coffers to hire and outfit deputies for rural patrol work.

I'd be happy to work with the committee as well as the appropriators to ensure that we find a way to fund these positions that are crucial to public safety in and around Penobscot County.