

TESTIMONY before the Committee on State and Local Government
Regarding LD 462
“An Act to Reexamine the Relationship among County, Municipal and State
Governments”
IN SUPPORT

March 8, 2021

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack, and distinguished members of the committee on State and Local Government: thank you for the opportunity to address you today. My name is Travis Kennedy. I'm the Director of Public Affairs for Cumberland County government, and I'm here to speak on behalf of the County in support of LD 462.

In recent years Cumberland County has made progress in proving that services can be efficiently and effectively delivered at a regional level, and oftentimes at a higher quality output. Slowly, and with the participation and encouragement of our communities, we've introduced and grown regional services that give the towns and cities in Cumberland County access to high-quality staff and top-of-the-line technology that they might not have been able to take advantage of on their own, through a cost-effective model that reduces the pressure on municipal budgets.

Cumberland County's Regional Emergency Communications and Assessing programs continue to grow each year. In 2019 we added high-level human resources consulting to our offerings, a service that has proven invaluable to several towns that have saved time and money responding to complex HR issues. The County continues to look for ways that we can consolidate and offer new services that our towns are asking for, exploring regional solutions to projects as wide-ranging as broadband expansion and crisis response teams.

As this comfort level with countywide service delivery continues to grow, we think it's the ideal time to consider whether any state services may be ripe for a

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regional approach as well. Cumberland County's interest in this bill is in its potential for mutual benefit between the state, the counties, the towns, and ultimately, the constituents that we are all committed to serve. We do not expect or want any legislation regarding a shift in services to act as a power grab for county government. It's our hope that the bill will open a dialogue between the state and willing counties in identifying services that may pose a logistical challenge for the state to carry out, and that the counties can prove they would be able to perform efficiently, effectively and permanently.

In concept, Cumberland County could be home to some state services like inspections and general public health, wherein our constituents are heavy end-users for a constricted statewide service; and by taking over responsibility within our borders we could relieve pressure on the state or other counties to serve the rest of the population. At the same time, these local officers could establish a more permanent relationship and regular schedule for our area businesses. But today, I don't know if this is true. The only way to find out is to do the research, and we're excited by the possibility of exploring these options.

We think there's room to work together in ways that are beneficial to everyone. Thank you for your time today, and for your consideration of this very important issue. We hope that this legislation spawns a wide ranging discussion on the benefits of regionalization - not just from the bottom-up between municipalities and counties, but from the top-down between the state and counties as well. I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have.