

**TESTIMONY before the Committee on Health and
Human Services**
Regarding LD 476

“Resolve, To Review the Delivery of Services to the
Citizens of the State by the Department of Health and
Human Services”

April 1, 2019

Senator Gratwick, Representative Hymanson, and distinguished members of the committee on Health and Human Services: 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 favor of LD 476.

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 our communities 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, and we're exploring regional solutions to projects as wide-ranging as broadband expansion and high-level human resources consulting. 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 regional approach as well.

Cumberland County's interest in this bill is in its potential for mutual benefit between the state, the counties and ultimately, the constituents that we are both 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 Department 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 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. Any exchange of responsibilities should be voluntary, based on a mutual agreement that the counties - and especially the urban southern counties, who are home to the most end users - may be a more natural home for some of this work.

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.

