



concerning than removing CHP and other state agencies that rely on and utilize the equipment every day from decision-making regarding public safety communications.

CHP notes that the MVA, the primary funding account for CHP and the Department of Motor Vehicles, is facing insolvency. In a recent report, the Legislative Analyst's Office noted that, "Until a plan is put in place to address MVA's structural deficit, we recommend the Legislature set a high bar for considering approval of any proposals that create additional MVA cost pressures and accelerate the risk of insolvency."

- 2) Costs of approximately \$14.4 million in fiscal year (FY) 2027-28 and \$4 million in FY 2028-29 and annually thereafter to the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) for seven additional positions, six vehicles, equipment, and an annual contract to use the California Radio Interoperable System (CRIS) (General Fund (GF)). According to DFW, the positions are needed to effectively implement the transition of public safety communications services (DFW's current system is contracted through another state agency and other rural providers) and provide long-term management and support of DFW's radio equipment, which spans the California coast, Sierra Nevada range, Central Valley, and desert environments, each of which presents distinct communications challenges related to terrain, remoteness, and system coverage. DFW contends such staffing levels provide appropriate geographic distribution of subject-matter expertise, while also ensuring redundancy and continuity of support during 24/7 operations, critical incidents, and large-scale multi-agency deployments.
- 3) Costs of approximately \$5.7 million annually to the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to participate in CRIS (State Highway Account). According to Caltrans, this bill relinquishes Caltrans' responsibility over its public safety radio system, which includes 15 dispatch centers, approximately 200 radio sites, and more than 18,000 subscriber units, to the PSC. Additionally, Caltrans notes it currently pays the PSC approximately \$1.5 million per month in fee-for-service work and anticipates such costs would rise as work currently being completed by Caltrans staff, such as radio site surveys, is shifted to PSC staff (State Highway Account).
- 4) Costs of an unknown, but likely significant, amount to other state agencies utilizing public safety communications systems, including the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Department, Department of Parks and Recreation, and Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Each department will have different implementation approaches and costs, as each department's current system and practices vary to meet unique needs.
- 5) OES estimates no direct fiscal impacts. Any costs incurred by PSC to more broadly support statewide public safety communications systems would likely be recovered through the contracting state agency.

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of GF structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

#### COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** The author notes that "state agencies outside of [OES] have directed their IT staff to perform work on CRIS and the PSC network, creating irregularities in this critical system." According to the author:

Disrupted or otherwise delayed communications during emergencies can create significant risks for first responders and other personnel charged with ensuring public safety. Without necessary oversight over maintenance done on the system, and the ability to easily diagnose an issue, PSC cannot fulfill its mandate to remain operational at all times. AB 2370 addresses this issue by reinforcing [OES's] authority over maintenance of statewide public safety communications.

- 2) **PSC.** The PSC is tasked with preserving and protecting human life by delivering reliable and dependable communications services, ensuring the state's public safety agencies remain connected in times of crisis. The PSC has three branches: (a) the Radio Communications Branch is responsible for the design, installation, maintenance, and repair of public safety radio communications systems and networks used by the state's public safety agencies, (b) the California 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Branch enables public safety answering points to provide the fastest, most reliable, and cost-effective access to emergency services for any 9-1-1 caller in California, and (c) the Technical Services Branch provides a range of services to support the PSC's overall service delivery. This bill requires the PSC to serve as the primary authority for all statewide and interjurisdictional public safety communications and prohibits the PSC or a state agency from entering into a contract for public safety communications services unless approved by OES and an effort has been made to connect with the state bargaining representative for PSC employees.
- 3) **Support and Opposition.** This bill is sponsored by the California-Nevada Conference of Operating Engineers, which argues this bill "clarifies and reaffirms existing law to ensure that authority over statewide public safety communications remain within [OES], preserving centralizing planning, oversight and coordination to maintain secure, reliable and interoperable systems."

This bill is opposed by the Peace Officers' Research Association of California, which argues this bill "takes a one-size-fits-all approach that may reduce flexibility for state and local public safety agencies" that "operate in diverse environments and rely on the ability to adapt communications systems to meet operational needs, particularly in time-sensitive and high-risk situations." Although recent amendments remove local agencies from this bill's scope, this bill still applies to state public safety agencies.

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