

EXHIBIT B

Mono County

Mono County Emergency Dispatch System Assessment



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I. INTRODUCTION

This report offers a thorough review of the Mono County emergency dispatch system, covering operational structure, stakeholder feedback, identified issues, and related legal and operational risks. It was prompted by a complaint about dispatch practices, which led to a broader evaluation of overall system performance and compliance with current public safety communication standards.

The purpose of this report is to provide Mono County Counsel with a clear, fact-based evaluation of the current dispatch model and to inform policy considerations for the Mono County Board of Supervisors regarding potential modernization, including the establishment of a regional communications center.

II. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This assessment was conducted through:

- Interviews with key public safety stakeholders across fire, Emergency Medical Services (“EMS”), and law enforcement
- Review of operational practices and dispatch structure
- Analysis of documented incidents and stakeholder-reported experiences
- Review of the 2020 Regional Dispatch Feasibility Study
- Consideration of emerging legislative requirements, including California Assembly Bill AB645¹
- Analysis of the National Emergency Numbers Association² (“NENA”) Standards and their alignment with Mono County Dispatch
- Analysis of the Association of Public-Safety Communications³ Officials (“APCO”) and their alignment with Mono County

The analysis focuses on system-level performance, not individual employee conduct.

III. OVERVIEW OF CURRENT DISPATCH MODEL

Mono County operates its Public Safety Answering Point (“PSAP”) within the County Jail under the authority of the Mono County Sheriff’s Office. Dispatch functions are performed

¹ https://calmatters.digitaldemocracy.org/bills/ca_202520260ab645

² <https://www.nena.org/>

³ <https://www.apcointl.org/>

by sworn correctional deputies who are assigned dual responsibilities, simultaneously managing custodial operations and emergency communications.

In this capacity, dispatch personnel are responsible for receiving and processing 911 calls, coordinating the dispatch of law enforcement, fire, and EMS, monitoring radio communications, and maintaining situational awareness of field units during ongoing incidents.

This operational model differs markedly from contemporary NENA standards, which rely on dedicated, civilian dispatch professionals whose sole responsibility is emergency call-taking and incident coordination. Although not explicitly prohibited, Mono County's dual-role structure inherently divides attention between custodial duties and time-sensitive emergency communications, creating competing priorities during critical incidents. While dual-role staffing models exist in similarly sized rural jurisdictions, they are generally driven by resource limitations rather than operational best practice. Emerging regulatory requirements and the increasing complexity of emergency communications make continued reliance on such models increasingly unsustainable.

As a result, the current model presents structural limitations in maintaining continuous focus on emergency communications, particularly during periods of high activity or simultaneous custodial demands. These limitations have direct implications for response coordination, situational awareness, and overall system reliability.

IV. STAKEHOLDER INPUT AND DOCUMENT REVIEW

The following interviews were conducted:

Name of Interviewee	Title	Date of Interview
Scott McGuire	Chief, Long Valley Fire Department	February 9, 2026
Brian Bullock	Chief, Mono County EMS	February 12, 2026
Ales Tomaier	Chief, Mammoth Lakes Fire Department	February 19, 2026
Dan Casabian	Chief, Mammoth Lakes Police Department	February 20, 2026
Nick Way	Chief, Bridgeport Fire Protection District	February 25, 2026
Dave Doonan	Chief, White Mountain Fire Protection District	February 27, 2026
Ingrid Braun	Sheriff, Mono County	March 6, 2026

The assessment examined several documents that provided insight and information. The reviewed documents are listed in the chart below. Additionally, the recording of the April 15, 2025, County Board of Supervisors meeting was reviewed. The video file can be viewed here <https://www.monocounty.ca.gov/bos/page/board-supervisors-video>.

Attachment	Document
A	Regional Dispatch Feasibility Study and Implementation Plan, dated December 17, 2020

Attachment	Document
B	Mono County Fire Chief's Association Letter to Mono County Board of Supervisors, dated March 27, 2025
C	Sheriff Braun Letter to Mono County Board of Supervisors, dated April 15, 2025
D	Mono County Sheriff Department Policy 800 <i>Dispatch</i>
E	CTO Training Manual
F	List of possible grant funding opportunities

V. FINDINGS

A. Dual-Role Dispatch Structure and Operational Conflict

Mono County's dispatch system is staffed by sworn correctional deputies who manage both jail operations and emergency communications simultaneously. This structure requires personnel to divide their focus between supervising inmates and handling urgent dispatch duties.

Stakeholders consistently noted that staff are often tasked with jail and dispatch duties during their shifts, leading to conflicting priorities and scattered attention. During busy periods, this dual-role setup hampers the dispatcher's ability to maintain continuous focus on emergency communications, especially when custodial tasks coincide.

This model does not align with current public safety communication standards, which prioritize dedicated dispatch staff trained solely in handling emergency calls and managing incidents.

B. Staffing Limitations and Workforce Constraints

Staffing was identified as a major ongoing challenge at the dispatch center. The County's rural setting limits the available labor pool, making recruitment and retention of qualified staff difficult.

The requirement that dispatch personnel also serve as correctional deputies further restricts staffing flexibility, as candidates must meet the qualifications for both roles. This constraint reduces the number of viable applicants and contributes to operational strain.

Stakeholders reported that staffing levels may result in a single person handling dispatch and jail duties simultaneously. This situation raises the risk of delayed responses, incomplete information collection, and decreased situational awareness during active or complex incidents.

C. Training Deficiencies and Variability in Performance

Stakeholders noted significant variation in dispatcher training and overall competence. Although initial training is provided, the length and quality of on-the-job training were reported to differ greatly depending on the trainer and shift conditions.

As a result, dispatcher performance is inconsistent. Some personnel demonstrate strong communication and coordination skills, while others lack proficiency in key functions, including call handling, incident prioritization, and relaying essential information to field units.

The lack of a standardized, ongoing training and quality assurance program further leads to inconsistent service delivery and hampers the development of professional dispatch skills.

D. Absence of Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) Capability

Dispatch personnel are neither trained nor authorized to provide structured pre-arrival medical aid instructions, including CPR guidance or other life-saving interventions. Although NENA and PSAP standards clearly support PSAPs in establishing EMD practices, Mono County has not adopted them. To become certified in EMD, dispatchers complete training that equips them with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to coach callers through CPR and treatment or stabilization of certain medical emergencies before EMS personnel arrive.

Stakeholders identified this limitation as a critical deficiency, particularly given the County's rural geography and extended emergency medical response times. In urgent medical emergencies, the lack of EMD protocols may delay or hinder life-saving actions before first responders arrive.

This deficiency does not align with modern dispatch standards and expectations of the County residents served by the communication center.

E. Technology Limitations and System Reliability Issues

Stakeholders reported multiple deficiencies related to dispatch technology and system infrastructure. These include recurring 911 system outages, limited redundancy capabilities, and gaps in system integration.

Outages occurred regularly and sometimes lasted for extended periods. Although there are contingency measures, such as rerouting calls to neighboring areas, they do not ensure full operational continuity, especially for dispatching fire and EMS resources.

Additional limitations identified include:

- Reduced functionality of computer-aided dispatch systems
- Limited resource tracking capabilities

- Radio interoperability challenges across agencies
- Reliance on manual processes during system failures

Together, these issues reduce situational awareness and impede effective coordination during multi-agency responses.

F. Communication Deficiencies and Operational Workarounds

Stakeholders reported that dispatch performance varies across key areas, including information gathering, call processing, and communication with responding units. Deficiencies were noted in asking appropriate follow-up questions, providing complete and accurate information, and maintaining clear communication throughout an incident. Many described instances in which they would hear dispatch send an asset from another jurisdiction to a call they recognized as being in their jurisdiction. Other instances included delays in dispatching backup or secondary units, failing to relay complete and accurate information, and confusing addresses (for example, sending a unit to 123 Main Street instead of 231 Main Street).

As a result, some agencies have developed informal workarounds, including direct communication between field personnel and, in some cases, self-dispatching. This practice includes direct communication between agencies via cell phones, bypassing the County dispatcher, and occasionally responding to an incident before it is officially dispatched. While these measures may address immediate operational gaps, they decrease centralized coordination and raise the risk of miscommunication or incomplete situational awareness.

G. System Reliability and Risk Profile

Stakeholders consistently raised concerns about the overall reliability and predictability of the dispatch system. Although the system remains operational on a day-to-day basis, its performance is described as inconsistent and influenced by several unstable factors, including dispatcher experience, staffing levels at the time of the call, and the operational status of dispatch technology systems.

Stakeholders indicated that service quality is not uniform. Outcomes may differ significantly based on which dispatcher is assigned, whether staffing is adequate, and system status, such as technical limitations or outages. This inconsistency affects call processing, information gathering, and resource coordination, especially during high-demand or complex incidents.

Several stakeholders further noted that the absence of a catastrophic incident to date should not be interpreted as evidence of system reliability. Rather, they expressed concern that current outcomes may reflect favorable circumstances, experienced field personnel compensating for dispatch limitations, or incidents not escalating to their full potential.

Collectively, these conditions contribute to a system that functions, but lacks resilience, redundancy, and consistent performance standards. As a result, the current dispatch model was characterized as operating with a high and ongoing level of operational risk, especially as incident complexity, call volume, or simultaneous demands increase.

H. Consensus Regarding Need for Structural Change

Across all stakeholder interviews, there was broad consensus that the current dispatch model is not sustainable in its current form. Stakeholders consistently identified the need for structural changes to enhance staffing, training, technology, and overall system reliability.

The concept of a regional communications center (see Section VIII) was widely supported as a potential solution. Stakeholders noted that a regional model would allow for dedicated dispatch personnel, improved training and supervision, enhanced technology infrastructure, and more effective coordination across agencies.

While funding and governance issues remain challenges, stakeholders consistently emphasized that maintaining the current system without significant modification presents ongoing operational and legal risks.

VI. INCIDENT-BASED ANALYSIS

Information gathered from stakeholder interviews revealed multiple specific incidents and recurring operational patterns that highlight the limitations of the current dispatch model. These accounts, provided by fire service, EMS, and law enforcement leadership, were generally consistent across agencies.

A. Delayed Fire Dispatch and Incomplete Resource Assignment

Multiple fire service stakeholders described a specific incident (later named the “Pack Fire”) in which reports of smoke were received, but dispatch did not initiate a timely or appropriate fire response, despite multiple calls indicating potential fire conditions.

According to those stakeholders, the initial reports were not escalated according to expected fire dispatch protocols, resulting in a delay of approximately 45 minutes in deploying appropriate fire resources. Responding personnel ultimately became aware of the incident through scanners’ unofficial communications with other fire districts and were required to initiate or expand their response from the field.

Stakeholders noted that this delay affected the early phases of incident management, such as size-up, resource distribution, and establishment of Incident Command. Although the incident did not escalate into a catastrophic event, it illustrated how deficiencies in call processing and dispatch decision-making can affect response effectiveness.

B. Failure to Provide CPR Instructions During Medical Emergency

On January 5, 2026, an incident was reported in which an elderly female caller urgently requested CPR instructions because her husband was experiencing a medical emergency. The call taker declined to provide CPR or other potentially life-saving medical instructions, stating that she was unable to do so. Subsequently, the individual passed away.

Stakeholders attributed this outcome to the absence of EMD protocols and training within the dispatch center. It was also reported that dispatch personnel are neither authorized nor equipped to provide structured medical instructions under the current policy. Although Mono County Sheriff Department Policy 800 (**Attachment D**), *800.4.2 Dispatch Supervisor (f)*, states that supervisors “*should* establish procedures for Emergency Medical Dispatch,” initial dispatcher training does not provide this certification, and no current Mono County program provides dispatchers with the training and certification to provide this essential service.

This incident was cited as a significant concern, especially considering the County’s rural environment, where EMS response times can be longer. Stakeholders stressed that dispatcher-assisted CPR is a widely accepted standard of care⁴, and the failure to provide such guidance creates a critical service gap.

C. Reliance on Informal Workarounds and Self-Dispatching

Stakeholders have expressed concerns that, due to perceived shortcomings in dispatch performance, agencies rely on informal practices such as direct communication between field units via cell phone and self-dispatching of resources. Ideally, professional dispatch centers should serve as the central hub for all communication and coordination of emergency personnel and assets. Relying on workarounds and self-dispatching undermines this system, leading to a lack of documentation, safety risks, and poor asset coordination.

Fire service stakeholders in particular noted that these workarounds have been used to compensate for delays or gaps in dispatch coordination. However, they also acknowledged that such practices are outside of formal protocols and could introduce additional risk.

The need for these workarounds was cited as an indicator of reduced confidence in the dispatch system’s ability to consistently manage incident coordination.

⁴ https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.nena.org/resource/resmgr/standards/nena-sta-041.1-2022_t-cpr_20.pdf, <https://www.emergencydispatch.org/the-science/foundational-documents/ff92ff49-1c04-4199-b865-b47f8e2d8010>

D. Impact of Recurring System Outages

Stakeholders reported that the dispatch system experiences recurring outages that disrupt normal operations. Some reported that these outages, however brief, occur monthly. During these periods, calls are typically routed to the Bishop Police Department (“BPD”); however, BPD is not equipped to fully dispatch resources within Mono County. For example, BPD cannot dispatch to Bridgeport Fire.

Recent documented large-scale outages include:

- March 10-11, 2023, County-wide 9-1-1 outage. Residents were directed to call the Mono County dispatch line directly.
- On March 23, 2023, Verizon users experienced a 9-1-1 outage. The Mono County Sheriff’s Department posted that 9-1-1 was down for all Verizon users in Mono County.

As a result, stakeholders described situations in which alternative measures were necessary, such as manually staffing stations or relying on direct communication between personnel. These conditions reduce system redundancy and create gaps in coordinated response capability.

Stakeholders emphasized that the frequency and duration of these outages increase the risk of delayed or fragmented response during critical incidents.

E. Cumulative Impact During Multi-Agency Incidents

Stakeholders consistently emphasized that the risks associated with the dispatch system are not limited to isolated incidents but are amplified during complex or multi-agency events.

Delays in dispatch, incomplete information, inability to provide EMD, and reliance on informal coordination methods collectively place additional burden on field personnel. Responders must address these issues while simultaneously managing the incident, thereby increasing the risk of miscommunication and operational inefficiency.

F. Consistency of Stakeholder Accounts

Importantly, these incidents were not described as isolated or anomalous. Rather, stakeholders from multiple disciplines independently reported similar experiences and concerns.

The consistency of these accounts among fire, EMS, and law enforcement leadership supports the conclusion that the identified issues are systemic and reflect broader operational limitations within the dispatch system.

VII. RISK OF INACTION

Maintaining the current dispatch model without modernization presents a progressively increasing level of operational, legal, and organizational risks to Mono County.

A. Escalating Operational Risk

The County's reliance on a dual-role dispatch model—where personnel handle both custodial supervision and emergency communications—creates structural limitations that cannot be fixed through small adjustments. This model inherently divides focus during critical incidents and hampers the dispatch center's ability to maintain continuous focus on call processing, resource management, and situational awareness.

As emergency incidents become more complex, requiring the coordination of multiple agencies, real-time information management, and dynamic resource allocation, these limitations are intensified. The current system lacks the staffing, specialization, and technological support needed to reliably handle such events.

Stakeholder accounts demonstrate that these limitations are real, not just theoretical. They have already resulted in delayed dispatch, incomplete information sharing, and reliance on field personnel to bridge coordination gaps. Although these issues haven't yet led to catastrophic results, the system's current performance suggests such failures are likely in the future.

B. Increasing Legal Exposure and Known Risk

The County has now been placed on clear, documented notice of deficiencies in its dispatch system. These issues have been identified by fire service leadership, EMS officials, and law enforcement representatives, and are reinforced by the 2020 Regional Dispatch Feasibility Study (**Attachment A**), the Mono County Fire Chief's Association Letter to Mono County Board of Supervisors, dated March 27, 2025 (**Attachment B**) and Sheriff Braun's Letter to Mono County Board of Supervisors, dated April 15, 2025 (**Attachment C**).

While California law grants public entities significant statutory immunities for police and emergency services, those immunities are not absolute and do not eliminate all liability exposure associated with emergency communications failures. When assessing liability, courts often consider whether a public agency had prior knowledge of system deficiencies and whether it failed to take reasonable corrective measures. Documented stakeholder concerns, together with incidents that highlight system limitations, establish a foreseeable risk profile. Additionally, evolving statewide standards, including California's move toward enhanced Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) requirements under AB645, may increase scrutiny of whether communications centers are using accepted professional practices and maintaining appropriate dispatch capabilities.

Should a future incident result in serious injury or loss of life and dispatch performance is found to be a contributing factor, the County could face significant exposure to claims of negligence. This exposure is further heightened in areas such as:

- Failure to provide pre-arrival medical instructions (e.g., CPR)
- Delayed or incomplete dispatch of emergency resources
- Communication failures affecting responder safety or effectiveness

Continued operation under a model widely identified as deficient increases the likelihood that future adverse outcomes will be viewed as preventable.

C. Life-Safety Risk in a Rural Environment

Mono County's geographic and operational environment further elevates the consequences of dispatch limitations. Extended response times, fewer available resources, and dependence on mutual aid underscore the importance of the dispatch center's role as an effective coordination hub.

In this context, deficiencies such as a lack of EMD capabilities, delays in resource deployment, or incomplete information transfer have a disproportionate impact on outcomes. Dispatch is often the first and most critical point of intervention, especially in medical emergencies, where early actions—such as CPR—can directly influence survivability.

The current system does not consistently support these functions, increasing the risk of adverse outcomes in time-sensitive incidents.

D. Erosion of Interagency Confidence and System Integrity

Stakeholder interviews reveal that confidence in the dispatch system has already been compromised. Consequently, agencies have occasionally resorted to informal workarounds, such as direct communication between units and self-dispatching practices, to compensate for perceived deficiencies.

Although these practices may occasionally enhance response times, they weaken the dispatch center's central coordination role and increase risk. Over time, persistent reliance on such workarounds can cause fragmented communication, lessen accountability, and lead to inconsistent incident management among agencies.

This erosion of system integrity further increases operational risk and diminishes the effectiveness of coordinated emergency response.

E. Inability to Meet Emerging Standards and Regulatory Expectations

The current dispatch model is not well-positioned to meet evolving state and industry standards, including requirements related to EMD and other emerging expectations for public safety communications systems.

As regulatory frameworks evolve, including those reflected in California Assembly Bill AB645, as stated in section IX of this report, the gap between Mono County's current capabilities and accepted standards will continue to widen. Ignoring these deficiencies may lead to operational and liability risks, as well as compliance challenges.

F. Conclusion

The risks associated with maintaining the current dispatch model are not hypothetical. They are supported by consistent stakeholder feedback, documented system limitations, and identified incidents that reveal performance deficiencies.

The County now faces growing consequences from continued inaction. Each new incident under the current system increases risk and makes failure more predictable.

Modernization of dispatch services—whether through structural reform or regionalization—offers not only a chance to improve operational effectiveness, but also a crucial step to decrease long-term liability exposure and ensure the reliability of emergency response services within Mono County.

VIII. 2020 REGIONAL DISPATCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

In December 2020, Mono County commissioned a comprehensive feasibility study conducted by Federal Engineering, Inc. to evaluate the viability of establishing a regional communications center serving Mono County and potentially surrounding jurisdictions (**Attachment A**). The study was undertaken in response to longstanding concerns regarding dispatch performance, system limitations, and the need to modernize emergency communications infrastructure.

The study included an assessment of current dispatch operations, stakeholder feedback, technology systems, governance structures, and cost factors. Its findings revealed several structural and operational issues within the County's existing dispatch setup, many of which align with the deficiencies identified in this current assessment.

A. Key Findings and Operational Benefits of Regionalization

The study concluded that transitioning to a regional communications center would offer substantial operational and organizational advantages, including:

Improved Interagency Coordination

A regional center would centralize dispatch functions across participating agencies, improving communication, reducing fragmentation, and strengthening coordination during multi-agency incidents, including wildfires and major medical emergencies.

Enhanced Call Processing and Dispatch Efficiency

Dedicated dispatch personnel, supported by standardized protocols, would enhance the speed, accuracy, and consistency of call handling and resource deployment. This includes improved call interrogation, prioritization, and adherence to established dispatch procedures.

Enhanced Situational Awareness

Modern computer-aided dispatch (“CAD”) systems and integrated communication platforms enable real-time resource tracking, improved information sharing, and better incident management across jurisdictions.

Standardized Training and Professionalization of Dispatch Staff

Regionalization would support the development of a dedicated, professionally trained dispatch workforce by implementing consistent training standards, certification requirements (such as Emergency Medical Dispatch), and ongoing quality assurance programs.

Modernized Technology and System Redundancy

A regional center would enable investment in updated dispatch technology, including CAD systems, radio interoperability, and redundant systems designed to keep operations running during outages or system failures. This is a major upgrade over the current model’s limited redundancy capabilities.

B. Governance and Organizational Structure

The study recommended considering a **Joint Powers Authority (JPA)** as the preferred governance model for a regional communications center. A JPA structure would enable participating agencies—such as the County, fire districts, and municipal partners—to jointly own, govern, and fund the dispatch center.

This model provides several advantages:

- Shared decision-making authority among participating agencies
- Cost-sharing and financial sustainability
- Operational independence from any single department or agency
- Flexibility to scale services over time

The JPA framework is widely used across California for regional dispatch centers and is regarded as a best practice for multi-agency emergency communication systems.

C. Alignment with Current Findings

Importantly, the findings of the 2020 feasibility study closely align with the issues identified through current stakeholder interviews and incident analysis. Specifically, both highlight:

- Limitations of the existing dispatch model
- Need for dedicated dispatch personnel
- Deficiencies in training, technology, and system reliability
- Challenges associated with interagency coordination

The consistency between the 2020 study and present-day findings indicates that the issues identified are longstanding and remain unresolved.

D. Implementation Considerations

While the feasibility study recognized regionalization as a practical and beneficial path forward, it also noted important implementation considerations, including:

- Initial capital investment and ongoing operational costs
- Governance structure development
- Stakeholder coordination and agreement among participating agencies
- Transition planning to ensure continuity of dispatch services

Stakeholders interviewed during this assessment similarly acknowledged that funding is the main barrier to implementation. However, several noted that the long-term operational benefits and potential reduction in liability exposure might outweigh the initial costs.

E. Conclusion

The 2020 Regional Dispatch Feasibility Study offers a comprehensive framework for modernizing emergency communications in Mono County. Its findings are still relevant and are supported by current stakeholder input and operational analysis. Although this study appears to have been widely supported and acknowledged by county leadership, there has been no identifiable action on its recommendations. Notably, the COVID-19 pandemic was cited as a significant factor in the shelving or postponement of any action items.

The study does not offer a theoretical solution; instead, it provides a previously vetted, actionable pathway to address the deficiencies identified in this report. Re-engaging with the study's recommendations gives the County a chance to transition from identifying problems to implementing a sustainable, modern dispatch system.

IX. IMPACT OF CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLY BILL AB645

Assembly Bill AB645 reflects a broader statewide shift toward enhanced emergency dispatch capabilities, particularly in the area of Emergency Medical Dispatch. The legislation increases expectations that dispatch centers provide structured pre-arrival medical instructions, including CPR and other life-saving interventions.

Compliance with AB645 by January 1, 2027, includes:

- Implementation of certified EMD protocols
- Dispatcher training and certification
- Quality assurance and call review processes
- Updated dispatch systems and software

Mono County's current dispatch model presents significant challenges in meeting these requirements due to:

- Lack of EMD certification
- Staffing limitations
- Dual-role responsibilities of dispatch personnel

Absent structural changes, the County may face difficulty achieving compliance with evolving state standards.

X. SUMMARY

Mono County's current dispatch system was created under operational conditions that no longer match the realities of modern public safety communications. The demands on emergency dispatch today—real-time coordination of multi-agency incidents, integration of technology systems, and providing life-saving pre-arrival instructions—have surpassed the capabilities of the County's existing model.

Stakeholders across fire services, EMS, law enforcement, and County leadership have consistently and independently raised significant concerns about the system's reliability, performance consistency, and long-term sustainability. These concerns are not isolated or speculative; they are supported by documented incidents, recurring operational issues, and a pattern of system limitations that force field personnel to compensate in real time.

The findings of this assessment, when considered alongside the 2020 Regional Dispatch Feasibility Study and the direction of evolving statewide standards, present a clear and consistent conclusion: the current dispatch model is no longer adequate to meet the operational, legal, and life-safety demands placed upon it.

Importantly, the risk associated with the current system is not static. As documented incidents, stakeholder concerns, and known operational limitations accumulate, the County's notice of potential system deficiencies becomes clearer. While California law provides significant immunities to public entities and emergency dispatch personnel, including qualified immunity for 9-1-1 dispatch-related emergency services absent bad faith or gross negligence, repeated awareness of deficiencies may increase the likelihood that future adverse outcomes are deemed foreseeable and potentially preventable. For that reason, continued operation without corrective action poses both public-safety risk and potential litigation exposure⁵.

The County now benefits from both historical analysis and current, consistent stakeholder input that identify the same core deficiencies. This convergence of information places the County in a position of informed decision-making, but also of responsibility. Continuing to operate under a model that has been repeatedly identified as limited and outdated increases the likelihood that future adverse outcomes may be seen as foreseeable and preventable.

Modernizing dispatch services—whether through structural reform or regionalization—is more than just an operational upgrade. It is a crucial step to ensure the reliability of emergency responses, safeguard the safety of the public and first responders, and minimize long-term liability exposure for the County.

Therefore, the immediate question for the Board of Supervisors is how Mono County will comply with emerging state requirements by January 1, 2027, while determining the most effective path to creating a modern, reliable, and sustainable dispatch center. This assessment supports the transition from issue identification to implementation planning, with a focus on meeting legal and operational requirements, improving emergency response coordination, and establishing a dispatch model capable of supporting the County's long-term public safety needs.

XI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the assessment findings, stakeholder input, and the 2020 Regional Dispatch Feasibility Study, it is recommended that Mono County take organized action to modernize its emergency communications system.

⁵ California public-entity liability is governed by statute. See Gov. Code, §§ 815, 815.2. In the 9-1-1 dispatch context, the California Supreme Court has held that Health and Safety Code section 1799.107 provides qualified immunity to public entities and emergency rescue personnel, including 9-1-1 dispatchers, unless the action was performed in bad faith or in a grossly negligent manner. *Eastburn v. Regional Fire Protection Authority* (2003) 31 Cal.4th 1175. California courts define gross negligence as the want of even scant care or an extreme departure from the ordinary standard of conduct.

A. Initiate a Dispatch Modernization Effort

The County should officially start a process to review and update its current dispatch system, acknowledging the operational and structural constraints found in this assessment.

B. Revisit the 2020 Feasibility Study

The County should update and revisit the 2020 Regional Dispatch Feasibility Study to mirror current conditions, costs, and stakeholder priorities. The alignment between that study and current findings indicates that the core issues still need to be resolved.

C. Engage an Independent Consultant

It is highly recommended that the County retain an experienced public safety communications consultant to oversee this process. Stakeholders from fire, EMS, and law enforcement consistently backed this approach.

Developing a modern or regional dispatch system involves complex factors—including governance, staffing, technology, and funding—that require specialized expertise. An independent consultant offers objective analysis, creates implementation strategies, and ensures the process is well-structured, efficient, and credible.

D. Establish a Multi-Agency Working Group

The County should establish a working group comprising fire, EMS, law enforcement, and County leadership representatives to oversee planning efforts and ensure stakeholder alignment throughout the process.

E. Evaluate Regionalization as the Preferred Model

Consistent with prior analysis and stakeholder input, the County should evaluate regionalization as the preferred long-term solution. A regional communications center would provide dedicated staffing, improved coordination, standardized training, and modernized technology.

F. Develop a Phased Implementation Strategy

The County should pursue a phased approach that allows for immediate risk mitigation, coordinated planning, and long-term system implementation while maintaining continuity of operations.

G. Identify Funding and Compliance Pathways

The County should explore funding opportunities, including grants and cost-sharing models, while positioning its dispatch system to meet evolving regulatory and professional standards. Potential grant opportunities have been identified in **Attachment F**.

XII. CONCLUSION

This assessment's findings support a clear and practical way forward. Involving a qualified consultant, along with collaborative stakeholder engagement and regionalization assessment, offers the best strategy to improve dispatch services, boost public safety, and lower long-term liability risk.