



the ability to communicate away from the police vehicle, officers are unable to immediately provide vital information to dispatch centers or other officers responding to emergencies, thus placing others in jeopardy.

DPS currently has six (6) differently configured VHF Motorola Radio systems with various capabilities, which operate on the state police statewide VHF radio mountain top repeater and microwave network.

The Law Enforcement Program, which has the largest inventory of radios, is in need of replacing its outdated Motorola VHF Syntor-X mobile radios, which are the backbone and lifeline of the state police officers stationed in the field. Without a reliable radio system the police officer cannot properly protect and serve the citizens, which he/she is sworn to do. The Motorola Syntor-X mobile radio, because of age and lack of replacement parts, stops functioning entirely on a regular basis.

The first 160 Motorola VHF Syntor-X mobile radios were purchased in 1985, an additional 93 were purchased in 1986, with 107 additional in 1987. The final 52 were purchased in 1990 bringing the total Motorola VHF Syntor-X mobile radios to 412.

When first purchased the Motorola VHF Syntor-X mobile radios were reliable; however, this model has been out of production for nine (9) years and is no longer supported by Motorola. Thus, the VHF Syntor-X radio replacement parts are non-existent or very difficult to come by. As a result of the unavailability of these vital parts for repair of the Syntor-X radios, an initiation of cannibalization of the Syntor-X radio inventory has begun. This process involves reusing "used" parts from older Syntor-X radios that have stopped functioning or are not repairable in existing Syntor-X radios, further exacerbating the problem by creating "heat creep" and "brittleness," while reducing the existing inventory of radios that can be installed in police vehicles.

The DPS Special Investigations Division (SID) utilizes the Motorola VHF Analog Spectra radio. The production of this radio system was discontinued in 1997. The SID Motorola Spectra radios were originally purchased in 1990 and were not configured to utilize a vehicle repeater system or handheld radio, as were the older NMSP Syntor-X radios. Thus, the current configuration of the Motorola Spectra radio does not allow the SID Agent to have the ability to communicate, via radio, while he/she is away from the mobile radio mounted in the police car. To try to alleviate some of these concerns the NMSP Division has provided SID with a number of its radio systems that have the radio repeaters and handheld radios. These radios came from the ranking staff officers who have agreed that the loss of the handheld radio and mobile repeater can be overcome by use of their issued cellular phone. The Motorola Spectra radio, which is no longer produced or supported by Motorola, needs to be replaced with the new Motorola VHF Digital Astro radio. This system will be configured identically to that of the NMSP mobile radio system to include the vehicle repeater and handheld radio with duress capabilities. This will ensure that SID agents will have continued communication while away from the police car and will be in constant contact with the District Communication Centers.

The Motor Transportation Division (MTD) was brought under the control of DPS on July 1, 1998. The MTD has an authorized strength of 102 commissioned officers. Their current radio system is a Midland VHF radio with 40 watts of power, whereas the state police mobile radios operate at 100 watts. This means often times MTD officers cannot talk to state police communication centers because of the low wattage of the Midland radio. The Midland radios do not have the officer duress capabilities, when an officer needs emergency assistance, as do the state police radios. The MTD radio system also does not

have a repeater system or handheld radios. The Midland radios need to be replaced with the Motorola Digital Astro radio. This will ensure the same radio communication capabilities that the NMSP and SID officers have.

### **PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

According to DPS HB529 would have a positive effect upon the performance of relevant agency programs, primarily the Law Enforcement Program. Officer safety is greatly enhanced by using one radio system that provides for handheld radios with duress features. (See Officer Safety below.)

**OFFICER SAFETY:** Officer safety is jeopardized as a result of having radios configured differently. The ability of officers in the field to communicate while away from their police vehicle is crucial. The handheld radio, with the officer duress capability, enables the officer to communicate or alert dispatch centers to life-threatening and/or dangerous situations without returning to their police vehicle, further enhancing the safety of the officer in the field. Without the ability to communicate away from the police vehicle, officers are unable to immediately provide vital information to dispatch centers or other officers responding to emergencies, thus placing others in jeopardy.

*Without passage of this legislation, the law enforcement officers will continue to work under a serious handicap that will only grow in seriousness and expense as time goes by. For example, the state police is experiencing numerous repetitive cases where state police cars utilizing the Motorola VHF Syntor-X mobile radios are being returned to GSD Radio Communications Bureau (RCB) repair shops for radio repairs 4 and 5 times a month. The repairs can take from a couple of hours to an entire day. Each time an officer takes his radio in for repairs it means one officer is unavailable to handle calls for service.*

*The continuing lack of Syntor-X radio reliability is known throughout the State Police Division resulting in a large number of state police officers purchasing their own cellular telephones to be used as a back up for their Syntor-X radio. The pervasive problems with the 412 Motorola VHF Syntor-X radios have been well documented by state police officers and could become a point of liability for the State of New Mexico.*

The GSD RCB Engineer has been consulted regarding the future direction of the NMSP radio network. The intent of GSD RCB is to plan and direct their efforts toward a VHF Trunked Radio System. The needs and available radio frequencies and network infrastructure of the DPS would not be met by attempting to change to an UHF System. The Motorola VHF Digital Astro mobile radio will be capable of operating on the visionary VHF Trunked Radio System, if the trunking capability is acquired during the life expectancy of these radios.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

The appropriation of \$3,337,600 contained in this bill is a non-recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2002 shall revert to the general fund.

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

DPS reports failure to pass the proposed legislation could lead to the following results:

The short-term effects will be that the DPS must continue to rely on a mix and match radio system that is unreliable. Long term implications--the existing radio systems utilized by DPS will become increasingly difficult to support and eventually will have to be replaced at an increased cost.

**DUPLICATION**

House Appropriations and Finance Committee Substitute for House Bills 2,3,4,5,6,7,& 8 and House Education Committee Substitute for House Bill 3 contains \$3,337,600 for this purpose.

LAT/prr/njw