

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. Senate Bill 792

PRINTER NO. 1358

AMOUNT

No Fiscal Impact
See Fiscal Impact

FUND

General Fund
Municipal Funds

DATE INTRODUCED

June 19, 2023

PRIME SPONSOR

Senator Robinson

DESCRIPTION

Senate Bill 792 moves Chapter 2 of the freestanding Counterterrorism Planning, Preparedness and Response Act into a new chapter in Title 35 (Health and Safety) and makes changes regarding urban search and rescue task forces.

This legislation directs the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) to establish urban search and rescue task forces within the existing regional counterterrorism task forces as deemed necessary by PEMA. The urban search and rescue task force covering Philadelphia must meet the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requirements of a Type 1 Urban Search and Rescue Task Force, and the task force covering Allegheny County must meet the FEMA requirements of a Type 3 Urban Search and Rescue Task Force. Requirements relating to FEMA typing standards are contingent on PEMA contracting with municipalities to serve as the sponsoring agencies for each task force.

Additionally, this legislation requires the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a study and assessment of the need, readiness and state of operations of Pennsylvania Task Force 1 and the Commonwealth’s urban search and rescue capabilities, as well as to identify vulnerabilities, gaps in the system and areas of necessary and appropriate improvement. The commission is required to issue a report of its findings and recommendations by November 30, 2024, or 180 days after the effective date of the bill, whichever is later.

This legislation is scheduled to take effect in 60 days.

FISCAL IMPACT:

PA Task Force 1 is an existing urban search and rescue task force organized by FEMA in Philadelphia that meets the requirements of a Type 1 task force. No additional funds are required to fulfill the provisions of this legislation as it relates to the task force covering Philadelphia.

According to PEMA, the cost to establish and maintain a Type 3 urban search and rescue task force in Allegheny County could be up to \$19 million in initial startup costs and \$4 million to \$5 million annually. However, PEMA is currently assessing

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how the existing PA Strike Team 1 in western Pennsylvania can be transitioned to a Type 3 task force. Actual costs will be dependent on the additional equipment and training that is necessary for the public safety agencies that participate in the task force to meet the requirements of a Type 3 designation. Existing state and federal grant programs that provide funding for public safety projects are available to offset costs for participating agencies.

This legislation provides that PEMA is not required to establish an urban search and rescue task force in any particular region. Accordingly, this legislation does not obligate additional state General Fund expenditures.

The Joint State Government Commission can complete the required study within its current budget.