

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. House Bill 843

PRINTER NO. 2748

AMOUNT

No Fiscal Impact
See Fiscal Impact

FUND

General Fund
Municipal Funds

DATE INTRODUCED

April 28, 2023

PRIME SPONSOR

Representative D. Miller

DESCRIPTION

House Bill 843 moves Chapter 2 of the 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 an urban search and rescue component 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 signing letters of agreement 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 the 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.

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 annual cost to maintain a Type 3 urban search and rescue task force in Allegheny County could be \$4 million to \$5 million annually. PEMA is currently assessing 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

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

FISCAL NOTE

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.

PEMA's budget for the current fiscal year includes a \$6 million appropriation for the purpose of providing equipment and training for public safety agencies to meet federal urban search and rescue task force standards. Existing state and federal grant programs that provide funding for public safety projects are also available to offset additional costs for participating agencies.

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