

May 28, 2010

**To: Joint Emergency Communication Service Association (JECSA)  
Policy Board and member boards and councils of the Joint Emergency  
Communications Association**

**From: League of Women Voters of Johnson County Board and Regional Governance  
Committee**

**Subject: LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS' RESPONSE TO RECENT CRITICISMS  
OF JECC OPERATIONS**

As you know, the League of Women Voters of Johnson County (LWVJC) was an early supporter of the concept of joint emergency communications services. The League is aware of concerns that have been expressed in the last few months by some members of the Johnson County Board of Supervisors (BOS) about the operation and financing of the JECC. So we have reviewed documents and news coverage available to us to evaluate whether these concerns are justified. This statement was prepared for presentation at the Policy Board's April meeting, and although some circumstances have changed we believe it remains relevant today.

In summary, we believe the Joint Emergency Communications Center (JECC) is working in the way intended by the entities that formed it. If specific objections have arisen, adequate mechanisms exist, both in the 28E agreement and in the regular meetings of the JECSA Board, to amend procedures or to adjust budgets. We feel it both unnecessary and counter-productive to start the process all over again as some have suggested.

The BOS is one of five entities that formed and are represented on the JECSA Policy Board, and, as such, should follow these procedures in the cooperative spirit that inspired this joint service. Withdrawing from or terminating the 28E agreement cannot be carried out unless four of the five signatory parties agree, and even then, outstanding debts of the JECC must be met by all entities. At the JECSA board meeting on February 26, 2010, three of these bodies stated their support for the present agreement and how it is being carried out.

Financing of the JECC appears to have arisen as a major concern. The present method of funding (a budget request to the Board of Supervisors via the budget of the Emergency Management Board) was agreed to by all parties to the 28E agreement. Johnson County (by terms of the agreement) agrees to certify the emergency management levy necessary to fund the operations of the Association, resulting in a countywide levy. By state law, the County is the entity which must levy the tax. Raising property taxes for all county taxpayers to pay for an essential emergency service seems reasonable.

Without speaking to specific operations of this essential emergency service, the League has reviewed the proposed JECC staff and their job descriptions and finds the number and types of personnel logical and reasonable.

The League still believes that the JECC can be a model for intergovernmental provision of other services which are used by multiple entities and/or all residents of the County. We certainly approve of the use of 28E agreements for regional services and feel the one set up for the JECC carefully lays out the powers, processes and procedures for a successful delivery of emergency services. We would encourage those who serve on the JECSA Policy Board to fully communicate with their member governments. And, we also would encourage the board to schedule time to examine and discuss member objections, and, if warranted and agreeable to at least four entities, negotiate appropriate amendments or changes in financing and operating procedures.

Thank you.