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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

**sSB 1489 (File 446, as amended by Senate "A")\***

### ***AN ACT CONCERNING REGIONAL POLICE FORCES.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill allows a regional police force to be formed by two or more municipalities that each have a population of 50,000 or less. Interested municipalities must submit an application to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) commissioner for approval.

Each regional police force must establish a regional police authority to oversee certain items (e.g., approving budgets and setting operational priorities). The authority must also (1) include representatives from each member municipality and (2) annually report to DESPP and the chief elected officials of each member municipality on certain specified information (e.g., police performance metrics).

Under the bill, a regional police authority is considered a municipal employer for collective bargaining purposes under the Municipal Employees Relations Act. Among other things, a municipal employer is subject to certain duties and prohibitions under existing law, such as the duty to bargain collectively and prohibitions against (1) interfering with certain employee rights and the formation of certain employee organizations and (2) discriminating against employees based on certain actions related to collective bargaining.

Additionally, as under existing law for municipalities with interlocal agreements, when a regional police force is formed under the bill, the collective bargaining agreement of each employee organization with representation rights (i.e. union) remains in effect. The formation is not subject to collective bargaining, but the impact of the formation on wages, hours, and other employment conditions are subject to collective bargaining.

Finally, under the bill, if two or more employee organizations have representation rights for regional police force employees, the employee organizations may enter into an agreement to act together for all collective bargaining purposes.

\*Senate Amendment "A" (1) delays the effective date from July 1, 2025, to October 1, 2025; (2) eliminates the underlying bill's provision requiring DESPP to administer an incentive grant program; and (3) adds provisions on collective bargaining and interlocal agreements.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

## **REGIONAL POLICE FORCE**

### ***Application Process***

Under the bill, municipalities that want to form a regional police force must submit an application to the DESPP commissioner, in the way he prescribes. The application must include:

1. a description of the regional police force's proposed structure and governance,
2. a financial plan detailing the estimated costs and projected savings from forming the regional police force, and
3. a plan for ensuring continued public safety during the transition period to a regional police force.

The DESPP commissioner may approve the application if he determines the regional police force would be sufficiently funded, managed, and effective and the formation would satisfy the bill's requirements.

### ***Regional Police Authority***

The bill requires each regional police force to establish a regional police authority to oversee policy decisions, approve budgets, set operational priorities, manage police operations, allocate resources, and ensure that public safety standards are met. The authority must (1) consist of representatives from each member municipality and (2)

annually hold a public hearing to review the police force's performance and consider resident comments.

The bill requires member municipalities that form a regional police force to assume liability for the actions it takes. These municipalities must share the cost of liability insurance proportionally based on population.

The regional police authority must annually submit a report to the DESPP commissioner and each member municipality's chief elected official, chief executive officer, and legislative body. The report must include information on:

1. the regional police force's budget allocations and expenditures;
2. crime statistics and community policing efforts in the member municipalities; and
3. the regional police force's performance metrics, including response times, community outreach, and officer staffing.

### ***Bargaining***

Under existing law, an employee organization or a municipal employer may file a petition with the State Board of Labor Relations (SBLR) seeking a clarification or modification of an existing bargaining unit.

The bill also allows employee organizations representing employees affected by a regional police force formation or a municipal employer of affected employees to petition SBLR to clarify or modify an existing bargaining unit based on the formation's impact. However, the organization or municipal employer must first obtain consent from each employee organization that represents employees affected by the formation.

Under the bill, any bargaining unit that consists of employees affected by the formation of a regional police force and existed before the formation continues to exist separately from any other bargaining

unit unless modified by mutual agreement with another bargaining unit that consists of employees affected by the formation or from the filing of a petition with SBLR.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea    29    Nay   0    (03/18/2025)