



# OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF BARNSTABLE COUNTY

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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**Sheriff**  
**Donna D. Buckley**

August 2, 2023

Senator Elizabeth Warren  
2400 JFK Federal Building  
16 New Sudbury Street  
Boston, MA 02203

Dear Senator Warren,

First, thank you for reaching out to the community to solicit feedback on the impact of the bridges' disrepair has on Cape Cod. As you are aware, the poor state of the bridges and the constant need for repairs is more than an inconvenience. It impacts our way of life and everything that we do at the Barnstable County Sheriff's Office.

Currently, 32% of our workforce at the Barnstable County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) live off Cape and we expect that number to increase in the future. With housing costs skyrocketing and little to no affordable housing options available on Cape Cod, the workforce pool is largely on the mainland side of the bridge. Continuing the current approach of yearly repair seasons, while allowing the overall condition of the bridges to deteriorate will further shrink our workforce pool and may even result in the loss of current staff. The BCSO employs not only correctional staff, but also dispatchers that staff our Regional Emergency Communication Center, Criminal Investigation staff, radio technicians, and administrative staff. The impact of seemingly constant bridge repairs is born by each one of our employees. Our facility operates 24/7 and therefore employees must be relieved by an incoming officer or dispatcher in order for them to be able to leave work. When the bridges are under construction, and commuting delays occur, the result can be forced overtime for the employees that are waiting to be relieved. This then leads to additional costs incurred by the BCSO as well as additional stress on our employees. With the repairs on the Sagamore bridge this spring, we saw employee commute times increase anywhere from 30 minutes to 2 hours. Replacing the bridges and eliminating the need for constant construction and upgrades would drastically improve the quality of life of our employees at the Barnstable County Sheriff's Office.

Another issue that arises from the constant cycle of construction on the bridges is an increased threat to the security of our facility. When staff who are on-duty are unable to be relieved on time, it causes a ripple effect on operations throughout the facility and the communications center. With forced overtime, employees who have already worked an eight shift must now stay for an additional 8 hour shift, adding more time onto their workday, eating into their family time and obligations, as well as their crucial off-hours which allow them to rest and reset and come back sharp for their next shift. In a high-stress job such as corrections officer or a dispatcher, their time-off is critical to being able to come to their next shift rested and alert, ready to perform the duties of their job. If our employees are not well-

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rested and sharp, incidents can occur which can put their lives, the lives of our inmates and the public in danger. Being able to adhere to a strict shift schedule would aid in alleviating a significant portion of forced overtime and allow our employees their proper off-job time.

Additionally, transporting those incarcerated to and from court appearances and other facilities is drastically affected by the bridge construction. Oftentimes, we have inmates that are housed at the Barnstable County Corrections Facility but need to appear in court in another county. That always requires an off-Cape transport. With the increased traffic and delays from bridge repairs and maintenance, our transport teams are fighting against the clock to get the inmate to their appearance on time. This causes added stress for both the employee and the inmate and can also cause a backlog at the court.

Finally, the challenges of commuting to Barnstable County make recruitment and retention even more difficult in this tight labor market.

In summary, the constant bridge construction affects everything from staffing to security at the Barnstable County Sheriff's Office. With the continued strain that is placed on commuters during these construction periods, our workforce is being drastically affected, as is the day to day operations of our facility. With new bridges that no longer need to have constant traffic-causing maintenance, we expect to see an increased workforce pool as well as smoother operations here at the BCSO.

Thank you very much for taking the time to solicit feedback from community partners on the impact of the Bourne and Sagamore Bridge replacement project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,

  
Donna D. Buckley  
Barnstable County Sheriff

  
So grateful for your support!  
Dma