



ECLEG JAN30'14 11:41 AM

County of Erie

MARK C. POLONCARZ
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DEPARTMENT OF CENTRAL POLICE SERVICES

JOHN A. GLASCOTT
COMMISSIONER

January 23, 2014

Hon. Stefan I. Mychajliw
Erie County Comptroller
95 Franklin Street, 11th Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

Re: Request for Audit of Erie County-Funded Air Cards for Law Enforcement

Dear Comptroller Mychajliw:

I am writing to formally request that your Division of Audit and Control conduct an audit of the air cards funded by Erie County government and provided to the Erie County Sheriff's Office as well as several dozen other local police agencies (towns, villages and city).

As you know, this was a topic discussed at the Erie County Legislature's Public Safety Committee on January 16, 2014, which you attended. At that meeting, legislators discussed the air cards issue and you stated that you would be amenable to conducting such an audit if requested. I encourage and welcome an audit of the air cards.

I believe that your audit should focus on the usage of the air cards, particularly those air cards that are "outliers" and which have massive usage. My information technology staff and Division of Information and Support Services ("DISS") professionals have indicated that there is a risk that such air cards with massive data transfers and downloads may be used to stream videos, watch movies, etc., which I am sure you will agree is likely not a legitimate governmental purpose. Because CPS has no control over the assignment and use of air cards once provided to agencies (and it is up to the local police chiefs and Sheriff to control and manage the devices), it is important to ensure that they are being used for proper law enforcement purposes and that air cards that are rarely or never used, be considered for potential elimination to save taxpayer monies.

The Department of Central Police Services ("CPS") has been working since 2012 to review, and where possible, reduce the number of air cards provided in order to ensure that County and federal/state homeland security funds that pay for the air cards are used

prudently and the County does not pay Verizon thousands or tens of thousands of dollars for service when air cards are not being used (or are potentially not being used properly).

I have had some success, working in partnership with local police agencies, in reducing (or ending) the number of air cards provided to agencies that are paid for by the County, especially air cards with minimal or no usage. I hope to have the same level of cooperation from the Sheriff moving forward after the January 16th legislative hearing.

At all times, as a career law enforcement officer, my motivation is to provide support for police officers and law enforcement. During CPS' review, when police chiefs have made a legitimate case for retaining cards, including those with little to no usage, I have deferred to their request under a law enforcement and public safety rationale. Nevertheless, it is also critical to ensure that technology is used in a fiscally-prudent manner which can withstand outside audit, such as from the US Department of Homeland Security or the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, which provide homeland security funds to the County supporting the air cards.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

John Glascott

(malt)

John Glascott

Commissioner of Central Police Services

JG

cc: Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz
Erie County Legislature
Erie County Fiscal Stability Authority
Robert W. Keating, Director of Budget and Management
Daniel Neaverth, Jr., Commissioner of Emergency Services
Timothy B. Howard, Sheriff