

2001 Survey of Massachusetts Environmental Police

-RESULTS-

PEER mailed surveys to all employees at the Massachusetts Environmental Police. Response Rate = 55%. Below are the results.

RESOURCES

1. The MEP receives sufficient funding to fulfill its environmental mission.

3% strongly agree 0% agree 0% no opinion 27% disagree 70% strongly disagree

2. MEP is sufficiently staffed to fulfill its environmental protection mission.

1% strongly agree 0% agree 0% no opinion 24% disagree 75% strongly disagree

3. Expenditures and staffing in the MEP have kept pace with the growth in other Environmental Affairs programs.

0% strongly agree 3% agree 15% no opinion 26% disagree 56% strongly disagree

ENFORCEMENT

4. MEP management is committed to enforcement of environmental laws.

4% strongly agree 36% agree 13% no opinion 37% disagree 10% strongly disagree

5. MEP executive managers place environmental protection before self-protection when making decisions.

3% strongly agree 16% agree 22% no opinion 24% disagree 34% strongly disagree

6. I think that MEP tends to focus disproportionately on small violators rather than large violators.

22% strongly agree 30% agree 12% no opinion 33% disagree 3% strongly disagree

7. I believe that environmental enforcement in Massachusetts has become stronger in the past four years.

3% strongly agree 28% agree 12% no opinion 22% disagree 34% strongly disagree

LEADERSHIP

8. I have confidence in the professionalism of the MEP managers to whom I report.

0% strongly agree 16% agree 9% no opinion 28% disagree 46% strongly disagree

9. I feel confident that MEP management would back up my professional judgement on a controversial decision.

3% strongly agree 12% agree 7% no opinion 32% disagree 46% strongly disagree

10. In the past two years, DFW or MF management has inappropriately intervened in a criminal investigation.

38% Yes 34% No Opinion 28% No

11. Director Richard Murray is providing able leadership to the Massachusetts Environmental Police.

4% strongly agree 29% agree 19% no opinion 19% disagree 29% strongly disagree

STRUCTURE

12. I think that the MEP should be removed from the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement.

87% Yes 1% No Opinion 12% No

13. MEP should become a separate agency under the Secretary of Public Safety.

81% Yes 1% No Opinion 18% No

14. MEP should fall under The Department of State Police.

45% Yes 18% No Opinion 36% No

MORALE

15. I fear retaliation from my chain of command for advocating strong environmental enforcement.

30% Yes 33% No Opinion 36% No

16. Morale within the MEP is:

0% Excellent 0% Good 15% Fair 42% Poor 43% Extremely poor

2001 Survey of the Massachusetts Environmental Police

**Responses to the question:
"The Biggest Challenge Facing MEP is..."**

LEADERSHIP (36 Responses)

For management to realize we have developed in to a law enforcement agency and that the officers are all willing to accomplish the mission if supported by management. Luckily we have a strong union that supports its officers in the field. Director Murray has done an outstanding job considering the support from his management! We have a lot of dedicated officers who just want to do the job and go beyond the call of duty. I think some managers fail to see this.

Col. Murray has been good for us on the Legislative and political front. His problem is his petty do-nothing middle managers who send more time nitpicking than they do providing any real leadership. If we continue with these people on the course we are headed, GOD SAVE US!

Our inept management who fail to see the "Big Picture" & focus on micro management of the officers. They don't have the ability to manage, as most of them were never in supervisory positions before becoming captain, major, & Lt. Col. There fore they don't know who to be effective managers. Most were sergeants who took the Capt. Position b/c no Lt. would take it b/c the pay was less. So by forfeit many people we promoted to managerial positions by default. And it's this ineptness & unprofessional manner when dealing with MEP problems & its officers that ruins morale. Because we (the officers) know that these fools don't have the ability or the commitment to fix many of the larger problems facing the MEP.

Director Murray relies too much upon what his management cadre selectively feeds him and as a result, I don't think the Director is aware of many of the issues and gripes which have officers upset and has resulted in poor morale. . . There is one lieutenant who has consistently let complaints (i.e. calls placed by citizens reporting illegal activity/requesting assistance, etc.) be ignored because he would rather have his officers performing "preventative enforcement" in other areas. He has gone so far as to tell the MEP communications center that any calls for service or complaints are to go directly through him rather than letting the district officer know of the complaint. This micro-managing has hurt the agencies reputation because many of the complainants (who are good informants) have given up calling our agency for help/with tips because we hardly ever respond. The same holds true for many of the local police departments. On several occasions I have been casually talking with local (town) police officers who have informed me of various illegal activities that had occurred in the no so distant past. When asked why they did not contact our division, they would respond by saying either that they had tried and no one got back to them or that because our "history" of not following up, they don't even bother to call anymore and try to handle the situation on their own.

Currently we are burdened with micro managing, self-proclaimed demigods who do not understand or have forgotten the problems field officers face on a daily basis.

We need a manager we can talk to and who will listen and try to implement good ideas. The Environmental Affairs management don't really understand what L.E. officers do and the risks we take, the way public safety managers understand their officers.

Coastal Management--Major McMann is not a good leader, he will not give any credit to any officer no matter how much work is done. I feel he has done the most damage to morale in the div.

An indication of the extent of the problem: The recent vacancy announcement for the position of "Inland Chief," a Major's position, drew a total of 4 applicants out of a possible pool of 16 eligible Lieutenants and 6 eligible Captains (22 total). Of the 4 candidates, one was considered a shoe-in on day 1; (the recipient, a Captain) the other Captain was the guy most people wanted; and 2 Lieutenants went through the process "to see what it was all about," with little intention of taking the job. That is the unfortunate part as both were experienced field officers, trainers and were college educated. . . Either would have made better Chiefs than the uneducated, politically connected, non-vet that got the job, but it was widespread that under no circumstances would any Lieutenant get the job over a Captain (Attributed to Dick Murray by several of his subordinate managers!) This is clearly an indication of an organization in decline and poisoned by the politics of the past decade. Nobody would touch this job with a 10 foot pole!!!!.

RESOURCES (17 Responses)

To acquire the personnel and other financial resources necessary to fulfill our agency's broad, multi-faceted mission. (In the 21+ years I've been with the DFWELE we have had no net growth in enforcement staffing. Meanwhile, our mission continues to expand while the public (rightfully so) demands a higher level of performance and accountability.

MEP has no facilities to call their own. Officers work out of old houses, are "guests" at local police stations, work from basements, and the like. We need new, modern regional headquarters, with fenced-in areas for seizures, storage facilities, etc. . . We are actually a homeless police agency and I squarely blame the secretariate for not remedying the situation. It is a horrendous and embarrassing situation.

MONEY: it's out there but MANAGEMENT refuses to try and get it, period.

To fill all vacancies in the division and increase the field officers staffing by at least an additional 25-50 officers across the state. Every day more and more responsibilities under new regulations, especially in the Marine Fisheries Enforcement are requiring the present coastal officers to be spread even thinner on the waters under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth.

Most regions need an office that belongs to them with storage for all equipment and a desk and locker for every officer.

POLITICS (9 Responses)

Cronyism is alive and well in this agency as evidenced by the fact that the number two (Deputy Director) and three (Coastal Major) positions are directly connected to the Bulger political machine. The old Registry of Marine and Recreational Vehicles was often referred to as "Schibelli's Navy" due to the fact that it was a totally political entity set up and controlled by the late Representative Anthony Schibelli of Springfield with a number of his namesake on that roster. The newly appointed Inland Major (also a number three position in the hierarchy of command) a product of the Springfield MRV political Machine.

Mngt. Tells us to wear blinders; and officers who make very many environmental cases and work hard are crucified, punished and threatened by superiors for taking action on traditional police crimes when they happen in front of us. . .I feel that MEP cannot enforce our agency laws in an unbiased way when our mngt., commissioner, and Sec. Can and do tell us where and when not to enforce Environmental and Mass general laws. It leaves open the chance for corruption, and endangers the environment and the public.

There is a strong political influence felt among MEP field personnel coming from our sister agencies: Marine Fisheries and Mass Wildlife with its seven member governing board. . .Deputy Director McKeon is constantly telling MEP field personnel that "we are not police." Deputy Director McKeon has discouraged the installation of police lights and will not allow 'Police' lettering on cruisers, a compromise to officer safety.

AGENCY (7 responses)

We need to break free of DFWELE and become part of an agency which understands the working needs of law enforcement professionals and will require management to run the Dept. accordingly.

70-80% of the enforcement that we focus on is public safety related, i.e. boating safety, snowmobile & ATV enforcement and public safety within the state parks and forests. For these reasons a move to public safety makes more than good sense--it would benefit everyone involved including the public and the environment.

I am writing this opinion with approximately twenty years of state service. I believe the Massachusetts Environmental Police should fall under the Department of State Police. The Environmental Police would be run more efficient and effective under this structure. Under our present structure, our administration is run by non-law enforcement personnel management group. The personnel management group of this

division could not perform the duties of an entry-level environmental police officer. . . Since Governor Weld's administration we have been plagued by an incompetent management group starting from the Secretary's Office to the Director's Office. . .Under the Department of the State Police the effectiveness and efficiency of this agency would improve 100%

The MEP falls under the wrong Secretary. Being in the Environmental Affairs branch of government sounds correct but it just is not. We are managed by people who know nothing of law enforcement. We stay where we are only because Secretary level management does not want to lose people under him.