

*Testimony of Kenneth Cole*  
*Before The*  
*MI House Appropriations Committee*

*March 18, 2010 / 9 a.m. / House Appropriations Room / Lansing, MI 48933*

Chairman Cushingberry and distinguished members of the House Appropriations Committee ... On behalf of Detroit Mayor Dave Bing and the honorable Detroit City Council and Detroit Police Chief Warren Evans, good morning and thank you for giving me an opportunity to engage you on House Bill 5888 – legislation prescribing the budget for the Michigan Department of State Police for the 2011 fiscal year.

My name is Kenneth Cole. I am Senior Vice President of Governmental Consultant Services Inc., more commonly known as GCSI, and I am the City of Detroit's lead lobbyist at the state Capitol. I know time is of the essence, so I'll get right to my brief testimony to allow for questions from the committee.

I would be remiss, however, if I did not take a moment to thank the members of the State Police Appropriations Subcommittee - *Chairman Richard LeBlanc and Representatives John Espinoza and Bob Genetski* – for their diligent work on this budget bill.

The City of Detroit sincerely respects the authenticity of your efforts ...even as it is deeply concerned about your proposal to shutter the Michigan State Police post at Cadillac Place in Detroit and reassign the roughly 60 troopers stationed there to Taylor or Monroe, presumably to save the state as much as \$1 million.

Please know this plan – however well-intentioned – would significantly reduce Michigan State Police patrols on Detroit freeways.

That undoubtedly would have a disparate impact on law-and-order in Michigan's largest city because the Detroit Police Department would be compelled to shift some of its focus to patrolling freeways ... whereas now – thanks to Michigan State Police – we're free to attend to the daunting task of combating crime in city neighborhoods.

But policing city neighborhoods *and* city freeways, in today's perilous economic climate, is an unfair demand of a municipality that ...

- One, is already down roughly 700 uniformed officers;
- Two, has seen the Legislature cut its revenue sharing by more than \$250 million since FY 2003, including a nearly \$30 million reduction this fiscal year alone and a proposed \$3 million hit for FY 2011; and
- Three, remains home to more than 40 percent of all violent crime in Michigan – that is homicides, rapes, aggravated assaults and armed robberies.

Let me be emphatically clear here: *The City of Detroit adamantly opposes this proposal and is prepared to fight it to the bitter end.*

Indeed, given the persistent and palpable threat of crime in Detroit, it is incredibly imprudent to remove *even one* law enforcement officer from city streets, let alone close an entire post.

Respectfully, state lawmakers may need to be reminded, too, that it was the horrific gang rape of a 19-year-old Canadian woman that led to Michigan State Police first patrolling Detroit freeways in 1976.

That woman, some of you may recall, got a flat tire southbound on the Lodge Freeway on the evening of February 12<sup>th</sup> that year. She pulled over to the shoulder of the road to fix it and subsequently was abducted by a group of men, who forced her into their car at gunpoint.

They drove her to an apartment and for the next 12 hours took turns assaulting her. The attack so distressed then-Governor Bill Milliken that he ordered Michigan State Police to commence patrolling Detroit freeways.

Please know that the City of Detroit recaps that painful story not to pander but, rather, to drive home the very real risk of criminal behavior on Detroit freeways absent a stalwart police presence. For more than 30 years now, Michigan State Police has provided just that, deterring wrongdoing on the Lodge and Interstates 75, 94 and 96, which all crisscross our beloved city.

Note, too, that Detroiters pay tax to the State of Michigan. But city taxpayers will become an afterthought – *not a priority* – if the Legislature passes House Bill 5888 with this dubious proposal.

And frankly, that's an offensive posture, given city taxpayers' well-documented history of helping *All of Michigan* by subsidizing operation of the former Detroit Crime Laboratory, which saved the state money for decades upon decades.

I should also mention that Michigan State Police's Detroit Post collaborates with the Detroit Police Department on operations plans to mitigate threats to the public during big-ticket, high-profile events, such as ...

- The annual North American International Auto Show;
- The annual Thanksgiving Day Parade;
- The annual Fourth of July Fireworks Celebration;
- The countless sporting events, including Detroit Tigers, Detroit Lions and Detroit Red Wings games; and
- The occasional global attractions, like the 2005 Major League Baseball All Star Game, the 2006 Super Bowl and the 2009 NCAA Men's basketball tournament.

Similarly, the MSP Detroit Post provides the helicopter used during fly missions in the City of Detroit ... and it teams with Detroit Police to execute Homeland Security plans to safeguard the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel and the Ambassador Bridge, the busiest border crossing in North America.

To be sure, the MSP Detroit Post provides numerous other benefits to the city, including modest payment by its employees of income and real property taxes to the municipality.

The City of Detroit, however, does not desire to belabor the point, which again is simply this: *Reducing trooper strength and presence in Detroit – where it is undoubtedly and conspicuously needed the most – constitutes poor public policy and really doesn't even make financial sense, given the exorbitant cost of relocating MSP personnel to the other locations.*

Again, on behalf of City of Detroit Mayor Dave Bing and the honorable Detroit City Council, thank you for your time and consideration of my sentiment on this legislation. I am happy to entertain questions from committee members.

