

➤ Hearing Records ... HR (bills and resolutions)

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**WISCONSIN STATE  
LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE  
HEARING RECORDS**

**2007-08**

(session year)

**Senate**

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

**Committee on  
Small Business,  
Emergency  
Preparedness,  
Workforce  
Development,  
Technical Colleges &  
Consumer Protection**

**(SC-SBEPWDTCCP)**

**COMMITTEE NOTICES ...**

➤ Committee Reports ... CR  
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➤ Executive Sessions ... ES  
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➤ Public Hearings ... PH  
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➤ Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP  
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**INFORMATION COLLECTED BY  
COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST  
PROPOSAL ...**

➤ Appointments ... Appt  
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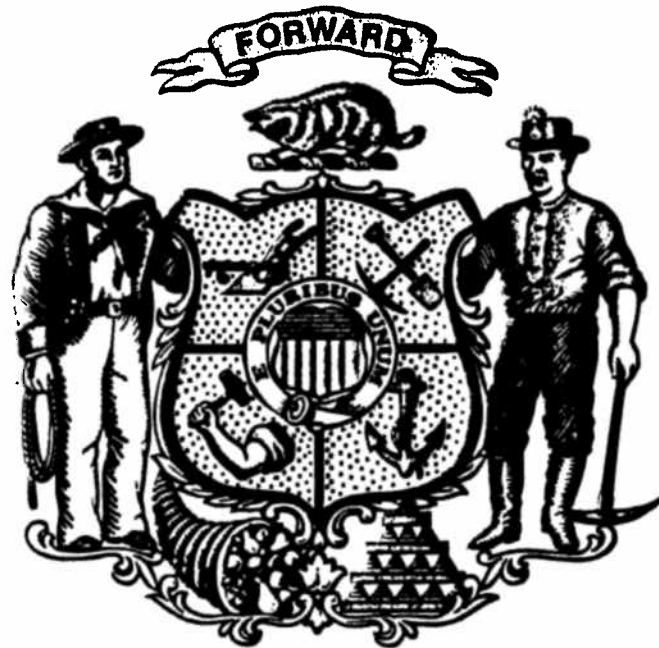
Name:

➤ Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule  
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➤ Miscellaneous ... Misc  
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STATE OF WISCONSIN  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF ATTORNEY GENERAL J.B. VAN HOLLEN IN SUPPORT OF

~~AB 737~~ SB 452

Assembly Criminal Justice Committee  
Wednesday, January 30, 2008

Chairman Kleefisch, members of the Committee on Criminal Justice, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Assembly Bill 737. This bill would enable us to implement the Wisconsin Crime Alert Network, a new statewide public safety initiative that we have developed at the Department of Justice.

At the Department of Justice, we exist to assist local law enforcement in our mutual mission to fight crime and enhance public safety. We do this in many ways. One way that we do this is by sharing information. Daily, the Wisconsin Statewide Information Center analyzes and disseminates to the hundreds of law enforcement agencies throughout law enforcement information about unique criminal activity or missing children. By increasing the number of law enforcement aware of a particular criminal trend or enterprise, we increase our chances of capturing suspects or preventing a crime before it occurs. Better information to more law enforcement about criminal activity helps them protect all of us from crime.

The Wisconsin Crime Alert Network takes the concept of electronic information sharing a step further: to those private entities affected by crime on a regular basis. By providing appropriate information to private citizens about criminal activity, law enforcement increases its eyes and ears, resulting in more suspects being caught and more missing children being recovered.

Here's how it will work. Law enforcement trained by the Department of Justice to use the Wisconsin Crime Alert Network would send out messages to participating businesses and members of the community about criminal activity, criminal trends, or missing persons. By using a drop down menu, those messages can be distributed to specific geographic regions—or even statewide—and specify the type of private entity to receive the message. Participants and law enforcement would then receive an email or fax with the message. Alerted and armed with information, participants can be on the lookout for unusual behavior or identified suspects. This will help them protect themselves—and help them alert law enforcement.

The concept of law enforcement sharing information about criminal activity with affected members of the local community is not new. What is new is the capability to efficiently transmit information to different regions throughout the state so that members of all potentially affected communities. And we should take advantage of that capability.

Take for example a series of OxyContin thefts from pharmacies in Southeastern Wisconsin. An alert could be sent out by the responding local law enforcement agency to pharmacies in the region who are members of the network. The alerts could carry images from security cameras or descriptions of suspects, allowing pharmacies to be on the lookout for the suspects. By reporting suspicious activity to police, they can protect themselves, their inventory, and ultimately those who might become hooked on the stolen prescription drugs that would have been otherwise distributed at a local high school. Or take an example of a scrap metal theft in Sister Bay. It isn't enough to notify the community in Door County that a scrap metal theft has occurred. The thief may go elsewhere to liquidate his stolen goods. By notifying the participating businesses that purchase and process scrap metal in Milwaukee, they can be on the lookout for the stolen goods described in a crime alert. When the thief attempts to sell to them, law enforcement can be contacted.

Sometimes statewide distribution will be appropriate. Take for example an abducted child. An alert containing pictures of the child could be sent throughout the network, and those on the lookout can report sightings to law enforcement. It was this very scenario that alerted me to how truly life saving a statewide crime alert network could be. Last year, the Department of Justice issued an amber alert. It was believed the abductor was taking the children north or northwest. Before the missing children could be recovered in Wisconsin, their abductor had taken them to Minnesota. Thankfully, Minnesota has a crime alert network similar to the one I am endorsing today. Information contained in the Wisconsin amber alert was transmitted over Minnesota's network. A participating hotel received the alert, and hotel staff recognized the suspect from the crime alert message. They contacted area law enforcement, and the children were recovered safely.

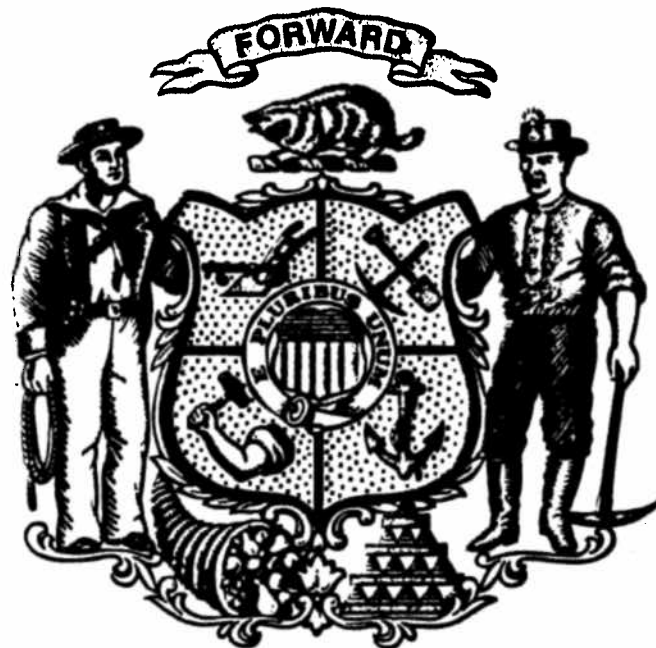
Assembly Bill 737 authorizes the creation of the Wisconsin Crime Alert Network. Creation of the system will not require any general revenue. It authorizes the Department of Justice to charge a fee to those private entities that choose to participate. This fee should be nominal. In Minnesota, where a similar network has been in existence for over 12 years, over 10,000 businesses are members and pay just \$12 a year to participate. One dollar per month to assist law enforcement in the apprehension of suspects—and to make their businesses and communities safer. Linking law enforcement with businesses creates a web of safety that each of our communities deserve.

I strongly believe in this initiative. If this legislation is enacted and we are permitted to implement this program, then I will pledge Department of Justice discretionary settlement funds to get the program off the ground while we sign up members. Once launched, I believe businesses will participate, and do so in broad numbers. Every business group I or my staff have met with has indicated strong support and a belief that many of their members would enthusiastically participate. That makes sense. Businesses have an intrinsic interest in participating. Not only can they help protect their staff and their inventory by participating, not only are many businesses throughout the state interested in the safety of their communities, but

safer streets enhances business. 10,000 businesses participate in a Minnesota's similar program. It should never be forgotten that reducing crime and enhancing public safety is a critical component of healthy local economies.

Chairman Kleefisch and members, this program has the ability to make each and every one of your districts safer. Increasing the eyes and ears of law enforcement is a major step to make all of our communities safer.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.





STATE OF WISCONSIN  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF ATTORNEY GENERAL J.B. VAN HOLLEN  
IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 452

Committee on Small Business, Emergency Preparedness, Workforce Development,  
Technical Colleges and Consumer Protection

Wednesday, February 13, 2008

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Chairman Wirsch, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Senate Bill 452. This bill would enable the Department of Justice to implement the Wisconsin Crime Alert Network, a new statewide public safety initiative developed at the Department of Justice.

At the Department of Justice, we exist to assist local law enforcement in our mutual mission to fight crime and enhance public safety. We do this in many ways.

One way we do this is by sharing information. Daily, the Wisconsin Statewide Information Center analyzes and disseminates information about unique criminal activity or missing children to the hundreds of law enforcement agencies throughout Wisconsin. By increasing the number of law enforcement agencies and personnel aware of a particular criminal incident, enterprise, or trend, we increase our opportunities to capture suspects or prevent a crime before it occurs. Better information about criminal activity to more arms of law enforcement in a dependable and easy-to-follow format protects all of us from crime.

The Wisconsin Crime Alert Network takes the concept of electronic information sharing a step further: it brings this important information to private entities that are affected by crime on a regular basis; it provides appropriate information to private citizens about criminal activity; and, it increases law enforcement eyes and ears. This results in more criminals being caught and more missing children being recovered.

As our proposal outlines, participating law enforcement authorities will be trained by the Department of Justice to use the Wisconsin Crime Alert Network. They will send out messages to participating businesses and community Network members about criminal activity, criminal trends, or missing persons. Messages can be distributed to specific geographic regions—or statewide—and can specify the general type of Network participant to receive the message – for instance pharmacies, banks, or retailers. Network participants and law enforcement agencies would then

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receive an email or fax with the message. Alerted and armed with information, Network participants can be on the lookout for unusual behavior or identified suspects helping them protect themselves—and allow them alert law enforcement.

The concept of law enforcement sharing information about criminal activity with members of the local community is not new. The capability to quickly and concisely transmit crime-related information to different regions throughout the state and members of all potentially affected communities is. We should take advantage of that capability.

For example:

- A series of OxyContin thefts from pharmacies in Southeastern Wisconsin. An alert could be sent out by the responding local law enforcement agency to pharmacies in the region who are members of the network. The alerts could carry images from security cameras or descriptions of suspects, allowing pharmacies to be on the lookout for the suspects law enforcement is already aware of. By reporting suspicious activity to police, members can protect themselves, their inventory, and ultimately those who might become hooked on the stolen prescription drugs that would have been otherwise distributed at a local high school.
- Or the example of a scrap metal theft in Green Bay. It isn't enough to notify the community in Brown County that a scrap metal theft has occurred. The thief may go elsewhere to liquidate his stolen goods. By notifying the participating businesses that purchase and process scrap metal in Milwaukee, they can be on the lookout for the stolen goods described in a crime alert. When the thief attempts to sell to them, law enforcement can be contacted.

Sometimes statewide distribution will be appropriate. Take for example an abducted child. An alert containing pictures of the child could be sent throughout the network, and those on the lookout can report sightings to law enforcement. It was this very scenario that alerted me to how truly life saving a statewide crime alert network could be. Last year, the Department of Justice issued an Amber Alert. It was believed the abductor was taking the children into north or northwest Wisconsin. Before the missing children could be recovered in Wisconsin, their abductor had taken them to Minnesota. Thankfully, Minnesota has a crime alert network similar to the one I am endorsing today. Information contained in the Wisconsin Amber Alert was transmitted over Minnesota's network. A participating Minnesota hotel received the alert, and hotel staff recognized the suspect from the crime alert message. They contacted area law enforcement, and the children were recovered safely.

Senate Bill 452 authorizes the creation of the Wisconsin Crime Alert Network. Creation of the system will require no general revenue. It authorizes the Department of Justice to charge a fee to those private entities that choose to participate. This fee should be nominal. In Minnesota, where a similar network has been in existence for over 12 years, over 10,000 businesses are members and pay just \$12 a year to participate. One dollar per month to assist law enforcement in the apprehension of suspects—and to make their businesses and communities safer. A better link between law enforcement, businesses, and the community creates a web of safety that each of our communities deserve.



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I strongly believe in this initiative. If this legislation is enacted and we are permitted to implement this crime fighting effort, I will pledge Department of Justice discretionary settlement funds to get the program off the ground while we sign up members. Once launched, I believe businesses will participate, and do so in broad numbers. Every business and law enforcement group I or my staff has met with has indicated strong support and a belief that many of their members would enthusiastically participate. That makes sense. Businesses have an intrinsic interest in participating. Not only can they help protect their staff and their inventory by participating, many businesses throughout the state interested in the safety of their communities. Safer streets enhance business. 10,000 businesses participate in Minnesota's similar program. It should never be forgotten that reducing crime and enhancing public safety is a critical component of healthy local economies.

I strongly believe that the primary reason state and local government exists is for public safety. State spending of tax dollars should reflect that priority. Budget shortfalls are not an excuse to underfund budget priorities, but rather an opportunity to reexamine what it is we believe government should do and spend limited resources accordingly. Budget shortfalls also serve as a reminder that we should always think creatively about how we can achieve our goals efficiently, without creating new tax burdens. The Wisconsin Crime Alert Network is an example of that creative thinking. We can solve more crimes, prevent more criminal activity, and safely recover more endangered missing children and adults – all without raising taxes or imposing involuntary fees.

Chairman Wirch and members, this bill before you has broad, bipartisan support that stretches across the state. I appreciate that support. I thank Senator Plale and Representative Bies for introducing this legislation that has the ability to make each and every one of your districts safer. Increasing the eyes and ears of law enforcement is a major step to make all of our communities safer.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.





SENATOR JEFF PLALE  
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**Testimony of Senator Jeff Plale  
Senate Bill 452  
Senate Committee on Small Business, Emergency Preparedness, Workforce Development,  
Technical Colleges and Consumer Protection**

Thank you, Senator Wirch and fellow members of the committee, for your consideration of Senate Bill 452.

I am very pleased to join Attorney General Van Hollen in testifying in favor of this important bill that would create the Wisconsin Crime Alert Network.

An integral component of crime prevention is having an informed citizenry that can act as another pair of eyes and ears for the police. The Wisconsin Crime Alert Network will be an effective tool for law enforcement and business owners in the prevention of crime, while improving and maintaining public safety for all residents of our state.

The Wisconsin Crime Alert Network would provide local law enforcement the ability to quickly alert the business community and the general public about a trend in crime or a suspect that may affect them or their business. Businesses and members of the public would have the opportunity to voluntarily subscribe to the Crime Alert Network for a nominal fee. These participating members would receive electronic communications from DOJ trained law enforcement personnel that could be selected by region or type of business.

In crafting this legislation, the Minnesota model provided helpful framework for our bill, and I anticipate that the Wisconsin Crime Alert Network will be just as successful. Established in 1995, the Minnesota Crime Alert Network has facilitated the capture of over 60 criminals who caused nearly \$3 million of damage in property crimes. Over 10,000 Minnesota businesses participate and pay about \$12 per year to receive the alerts.

As you can see, SB 452 has garnered widespread bi-partisan support in both houses of the legislature. Increased public safety and crime prevention are laudable goals that implementation of the Wisconsin Crime Alert Network would help us achieve across the state. By providing information to the business community about criminal activity, law enforcement increases its eyes and ears, more suspects are caught, and more runaways are recovered. I hope you will join me in supporting SB 452.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding this bill.







02-13-2008

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Found In  
SB 452  
Folder

### Wisconsin Crime Alert Network: FAQs

What is it?

- It is a new Attorney General initiative to provide local law enforcement with the ability to quickly alert the business community and the general public about a crime trend or a suspect that may affect them or their business.

How does it work?

- DOJ-DCI trained law enforcement would send out messages to participating businesses and members of the community using electronic communications that could be selected by region or type of business. For example, in the event of a series of Oxycondrin pharmacy robberies in Southeastern Wisconsin, an alert could be sent out by each responding agency to pharmacies in the region who are members.

What is the public benefit?

- By providing information to the business community about criminal activity, law enforcement increases its eyes and ears, more suspects are caught, more runaways are recovered. Businesses have an interest in participating because these alerts can be targeted to criminal activity that affects their particular businesses or their areas. Safer streets and preventing theft enhances business as well as protect safety.

Isn't there a concern that sensitive information about ongoing law enforcement investigations will be disclosed to the public?

- No. All entries into the system for distribution to businesses will be by law enforcement trained on the system and familiar with these sensitivities.

Is there the infrastructure for this?

- Communication would be through a private entity contractor to email and blast faxes to participating businesses and members of the public. The infrastructure would need to be built here, but can be easily adapted based on the Minnesota model.

What resources will be needed?

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- We estimate that it will cost approximately \$25,000 to build the infrastructure, additional amounts will be necessary to conduct outreach and training. Ongoing costs are likely to be approximately \$125,000 a year – approximately \$75,000 to the contractor maintaining the network and approximately \$50,000 to support a full-time analyst at DOJ-DCI to support the system.

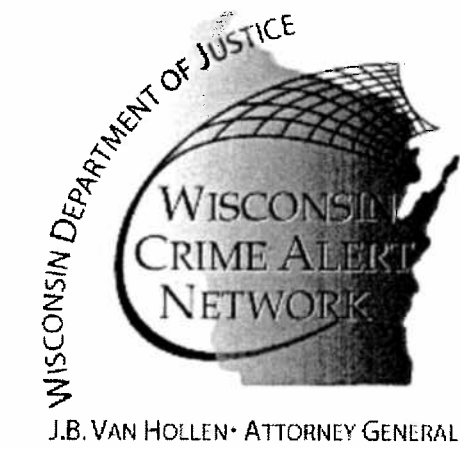
Who will pay for this?

- Ongoing costs can be paid for by participating members. In Minnesota, a slightly smaller state by population, annual fees to business are \$12 per year and there are currently over 10,000 members. The Attorney General has committed to funding start-up costs through his discretionary settlement account, with approval from DOA. The AG is also willing to use the account to cover shortfalls during the start up period while membership grows.

What do we need from the legislature?

- Ideally, statutory language expressly authorizing the creation of the program and the ability to charge participating business entities a reasonable fee to cover the costs of the program. Only users would pay under the AG's plan, there would be no need for GPR.





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### **What is it?**

- It is Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen's initiative to provide local law enforcement with the ability to quickly alert the business community and the general public about a crime trend or a suspect that may affect them or their business. Businesses with information about those criminal activities can report those activities to local law enforcement.

### **How does it work?**

- DOJ trained law enforcement would send out messages to participating businesses and members of the community using electronic communications that could be selected by region or type of business. For example, in the event of a series of OxyContin thefts from pharmacies in Southeastern Wisconsin, an alert could be sent out by each responding agency to pharmacies in the region who are members.

### **What is the public benefit?**

- By providing information to the business community about criminal activity, law enforcement increases its eyes and ears, more suspects are caught, more runaways are recovered. Businesses have an interest in participating because these alerts can be targeted to criminal activity that affects their particular businesses or their areas. Safer streets and preventing theft enhances business as well as promotes public safety.

### **Isn't there a concern that sensitive information about ongoing law enforcement investigations will be disclosed to the public?**

- No. All entries into the system for distribution to businesses will be by law enforcement trained on the system and familiar with these sensitivities.



### **Is there the infrastructure for this?**

- Communication would be through a private entity contractor to email and blast faxes to participating businesses and members of the public. The Department of Justice already has relationships with contractors who have built essential capabilities by participating in Amber backups and Missing Endangered Alerts. As importantly, this model has been developed and tested. Attorney General Van Hollen's plan is based on a Minnesota program that has been providing similar services for more than 10 years. Though infrastructure would need to be built here, it can be easily adapted based on the Minnesota model.

### **Who will pay for this?**

- Ongoing annual costs are expected to be approximately \$125,000/year. These costs will be paid for by charging private members, who participate voluntarily, an annual fee. In Minnesota, a slightly smaller state by population, annual fees to business are \$12 per year and there are currently over 10,000 members. Attorney General Van Hollen has pledged to fund start-up costs through his discretionary settlement account. Van Hollen is also willing to use the account to cover shortfalls during the initial start-up period while membership grows.

### **What do we need from the legislature?**

- To get the program operational, we will need a law expressly authorizing the ability to charge participating business entities a fee to cover the costs of the program. Only users who voluntarily participate would pay under Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen's plan. There would be no need for general tax revenue. Representative Garey Bies and Senator Jeffrey Plale are co-sponsoring legislation (2007 AB 737) that would authorize Attorney General Van Hollen to implement the Wisconsin Crime Alert Network.