



National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society  
Central  
New England  
Chapter

Representative Michael Costello, House Chair  
Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security  
State House Room 167  
Boston, MA 02133

Senator Stephen Brewer, Senate Vice Chair  
Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security  
State House Room 109-B  
Boston, MA 02133

Re: **SB 1360 RESOLVE Relative To The Availability And Condition Of  
Community Disaster Facilities**

Dear Chairman Costello and Vice Chairman Brewer,

On behalf of over 11,000 people in Massachusetts coping with the devastating effects of multiple sclerosis, I am writing to request that the Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security release with a FAVORABLE REPORT SB 1360 **RESOLVE Relative To The Availability And Condition Of Community Disaster Facilities**. In addition, we do have one request. The bill sets up a special commission to study and report on the number and location etc. of approved evacuation shelters for use during natural or man made disasters. The Central New England Chapter of the National MS Society respectfully requests that a person representing the disabled population be appointed to serve on the commission. For example, someone from the Architectural Access Board, the regulatory agency within the Massachusetts Office of Public Safety, would be a good choice. The AAB's legislative mandate states that it shall develop and enforce regulations designed to make public buildings accessible to, functional for, and safe for use by persons with disabilities. Their expertise is exactly what would be needed to evaluate current facilities or recommend designs for new evacuation shelters.

Our organization is particularly interested in the passage of SB 1360 because it would be good to know which approved shelters are ADA compliant for people with mobility challenges and whether - at the very least - wheelchairs and scooters fit in hallways and bathrooms. This is enormously important information we would like to know before disaster strikes. We do not want the horror of New Orleans to fall upon the disabled population of Massachusetts should a disaster occur. For able and disabled people alike, the Super Dome travesty does not have to happen here in Massachusetts if we have information we need to act purposefully in a time of disaster and prepare now.

Thank you very much for considering our request.

Sincerely,



Michelle Dickson  
Advocacy Manager