

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, statement not yet issued

Action:	Do Pass and Be Referred to the Committee on Rules by prior reference
Vote:	8 - 0 - 0
Yeas:	Boone, Esquivel, Freeman, Komp, Matthews, Riley, Weidner, Cowan
Nays:	0
Exc.:	0
Prepared By:	David Molina, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	4/14

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Allows radio and data communications districts to be formed as special districts by local regions. Authorizes districts to acquire, maintain and operate voice and data communications systems for use by public safety agencies within their boundaries. Authorizes districts to contract with United States for acquisition and operation of radio and data communication facilities and related property. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- The need to allow local communities to incorporate radio and data communications districts into special districts to meet emergency services requirement for sustainable, interoperable radio and data communications
- The need to give local jurisdictions the authority to seek voter approval for property tax funding for regional interoperability radio and data communications systems independent of State or Federal funding
- Facilitates earlier deployment of Oregon Wireless Interoperability Network
- Potential model for future use in jurisdictions across Oregon

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: Situated between Umatilla and Morrow County, the Umatilla Chemical Depot (UMCD) is one of six Army installations in the U.S. that has stored and maintained the nation's chemical weapons stockpile. Under federal mandate, the U.S. Army acquired, maintained and operated a tactical 450 MHz ultra-high frequency (UHF) communications system for on/off-post communication for 31-unit local emergency responders. Federal funding currently pays 100 percent of costs during the process of destroying chemical agents and munitions. Additionally, the U.S. Army is expected to leave behind a tactical communications system, valued at \$14 million that has been used and relied upon by Umatilla and Morrow County emergency responders. However, UMCD is scheduled to cease operation in the spring of 2010. Of the 14 radio sites in the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program, the Oregon Wireless Interoperability Network (OWIN) is scheduled to take possession of eight sites, while Umatilla and Morrow Counties will retain six sites. OWIN administrators estimate the total partnership savings to the State of Oregon to be approximately \$60 million. Proponents of House Bill 3254 also assert the need to sustain current emergency response communication after federal funding ceases.

House Bill 3254 provides a mechanism for Umatilla and Morrow Counties to secure optional revenue streams, similar to a fire district, that would fund and govern the system's operation and maintenance. Proponents estimate that as much as \$250,000 could be generated annually to operate and maintain the system, as well as an additional \$500,000 for replacements to local districts. Without authority for funding and management of the 450 MHz UHF system, the district may have to revert to the previously installed very-high frequency (VHF) system on which no additional investments have been made. Problematically, the VHF system has been downsized significantly while increasing capacity on the 450 MHz UHF was doubled and many spare parts are now unavailable.

4/17/2009 10:54:00 AM

This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.