

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action:	Do Pass
Vote:	5 - 0 - 0
Yeas:	Atkinson, Burdick, Ferrioli, Metsger, Devlin
Nays:	-
Exc.:	-
Prepared By:	Erin Seiler, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	5/29

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Allows radio and data communications districts to be formed as special districts within all or part of one or more counties. 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. Effective 91st day following sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Funding options for system after Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program financial support ends
- Lack of statutory mechanism to establish radio or data districts as special districts
- Use of communication infrastructure by first responders in Umatilla and Morrow Counties
- Partnership with Oregon Wireless Interoperability Network (OWIN)
- Long-term regional benefits

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: 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. It is situated between Umatilla and Morrow Counties. UMCD is scheduled to cease operation in the spring of 2010. As part of the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program, the U.S. Army--under federal mandate--acquired, maintained and operated a tactical 450 MHz ultra-high frequency (UHF) communications system for on/off-post communication for 31 local emergency responders. Federal funding currently pays 100 percent of costs of the communication system during the process of destroying chemical agents and munitions.

When UMCD ceases to operate, federal funding will also stop. However, 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. Of the 14 radio sites in the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program, the OWIN is scheduled to take possession of eight sites, while Umatilla and Morrow Counties will retain six sites.

House Bill 3254 provides a mechanism for Umatilla and Morrow Counties to secure optional revenue streams by creating a special district that would fund and govern the system's operation and maintenance. This would allow for the continuation of current emergency response communication services after federal funding ceases. There is the possibility of generating as much as \$250,000 annually for the operation and maintenance of the system, as well as an additional \$500,000 for replacements to local districts. Without authority for funding and management of the 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. This measure is not county-specific; the possibility of creating radio and data communication districts would be available to all counties.

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