



CITY OF PORTLAND

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MEASURE: HB 2075
EXHIBIT: L
HOUSE REVENUE COMMITTEE
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SUBMITTED BY: LAURA WOLFE

Co-Chairs Barnhart and Berger, members of the committee:

Good morning:

I am Laura Wolfe with the City of Portland's Bureau of Emergency Communications (BOEC) 9-1-1 Center and am here today in support of HB2075. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. BOEC provides 9-1-1 call answering and dispatch services to all of the police, fire and medical responders, the 725,000 residents, along with the visitors to Multnomah County. These areas include Fairview, Wood Village, Gresham, Troutdale, Sauvies Island, Corbett, Maywood Park, and Portland. On average, BOEC answers approximately 3000 telephone calls a day, or over 1 million a year. BOEC receives approximately 17 percent of the annual 9-1-1 telephone tax distribution.

We are aware that the cellular telephone market is shifting away from wireless contract plans and customers appear to choose prepaid phones more frequently. Out of the 2500 calls a day that BOEC processes, we estimate that 70 percent are made from cellular telephones. Out of those, based on national statistics, 20 percent of those calls come from pre-paid cell phones.

For over the past 27 years, the 9-1-1 Telephone Tax has provided critical funding to support and implement 9-1-1 services to all of Oregon. ORS 403.200 requires each circuit capable of accessing 9-1-1 to pay a tax of 75 cents per month. However, since the inception of pre-paid wireless, those companies providing this service are not collecting this tax in Oregon. This lack of support by the pre-paid wireless phone industry has deprived the Oregon 9-1-1 Program of an estimated \$6.8 million dollars in 2009, and approximately \$1 million dollars a year to BOEC.

In today's world, Oregon's 9-1-1 Centers are facing challenges attempting to catch up to the rapidly changing technology. The various ways in which to access 9-1-1 either today or in the future, all present their own unique set of issues; VoIP (Voice over internet Protocol), devices which will allow people to dial 9-1-1 from their PDA, pagers, etc, all with the expectation that their call will be routed to the correct 9-1-1 center, with their location information attached; however, today, this is not the case. As more and more technology, referred to as next generation or "Next Gen" emerges, it is critical that we are able to keep pace with these challenges for the safety and welfare of all. With a lack of funding, the ability to provide the service level already expected by our citizens is severely compromised. Collecting this tax from the pre-paid providers will help continue funding the implementation and support the necessary equipment required to perform these essential tasks.

The City of Portland joins Oregon APCO/NENA and the Public Safety Answering Points throughout Oregon in support of legislation to require the prepaid wireless phone industry to support the Oregon 9-1-1 Program.

Thank you for your time, I will answer any questions you may have. p