



CITY OF PORTLAND

BUREAU OF EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

Sam Adams, Mayor
Amanda Fritz, Commissioner

Lisa Turley, Director
Post Box 1927
Portland, Oregon 97207
503.823.0911
FAX 503.823.4630

EXHIBIT: 7
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AFFAIRS
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SUBMITTED BY: Laura Wolfe

Senator Boquist, Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the City of Portland's Bureau of Emergency Communications (BOEC) 9-1-1 Center, I am asking for your support of SB1560.

The City of Portland's Bureau of Emergency Communications (BOEC) 9-1-1 Center provides 9-1-1 call answering and dispatch services to all of the police, fire and medical responders, the 765,000 residents, along with the visitors to Multnomah County. These areas include Fairview, Wood Village, Gresham, Troutdale, Sauvie Island, Corbett, Maywood Park, and Portland. On average, BOEC answers approximately 3000 telephone calls a day, or over 1 million a year.

Every day we face the challenge of how to meet the demands of emerging technology head on. No longer is the traditional way of calling 9-1-1 the norm. One of the biggest challenges facing 9-1-1 centers is how to accept text messaging and other forms of communication. In today's society, most of our youth use text messaging as their main form of communication. They don't necessarily understand that 9-1-1 centers can't process their messages, as evidenced in the Virginia Tech slayings. Many of those students attempted to contact 9-1-1 via text messaging and did not realize their calls for help went unanswered.

In order to meet the demands of heavy call volumes and to meet the challenges of emerging technology, it is imperative that stable 9-1-1 funding remain in place. We must be able to rely on adequate sustainable funding to not only meet the current demands on the 9-1-1 systems, but to prepare for the receipt of those calls for help from new devices; as I mentioned before text messaging, video phones, etc. We must be able to meet the public's expectation of having a 9-1-1 system in place to answer their calls for help.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Wolfe

Competence – Integrity – Respect – Responsibility – Teamwork – Compassion