CITY OF PORTLAND

BUREAU OF EMERGENCY
COMMUNICATIONS

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Charlie Hales, Mayor

March 21, 2013

Senator Brian Boquist, Chair
Senate Veterans and Emergency Preparedness Committee
900 Court St. NE, Hearing Room B
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 597

Chair Boquist, Members of the Veterans and Emergency Preparedness Committee:

The City of Portland's Bureau of Emergency Communications (BOEC) provides 9-1-1 call answering and dispatch services for all police, fire and medical responders throughout all of Multnomah County. On average, BOEC answers approximately 3000 telephone calls a day, or over 1 million a year. On average, the 9-1-1 telephone tax provides approximately 23% of BOEC's operating budget; the remainder comes from the City and other partner agency user fees.

BOEC requests your support for SB 597 which specifies that 9-1-1 funds should be collected and used exclusively for emergency communications services.

Protecting emergency communications funds from uses other than emergency communications services is also consistent with federal policy. The NET 911 Improvement Act which was passed and signed into law in 2008, makes clear that Congress expects revenues raised through fees or charges on mobile services for improvements to emergency communications systems to be used only in support of 9-1-1 services.

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 funding to not only sustain current demands on the 9-1-1 systems, but to prepare for the receipt of those calls for help from new devices; such as text messaging, smart phones, video, etc. SB 597 will ensure that 9-1-1 funds are used only for 9-1-1 services. This will provide stability in the 9-1-1 system and help us predictably ensure high quality service to the public into the future.

BOEC respectfully urges your support for SB 597.

Lisa Turley, MA, MPA, ENP