
OREGON STATE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 597

Before the Senate Veterans Committee / March 21, 2013

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Chair Boquist and members of the Senate Veterans and Emergency Preparedness Committee:

The Oregon State Sheriffs' Association is comprised of Oregon's 36 elected county sheriffs. Sheriffs take seriously their charge to be "conservators of the peace." Their role in public safety is broad, including routine patrol, investigating crime, search and rescue, marine patrol, jails, community corrections, court security, civil services and the issuance of concealed handgun licenses.

The 9-1-1/"Public Safety Answering Point" (PSAP) system is a vital link in the public safety system. Without it, Sheriffs and other first responders can't do their jobs. Oregon Sheriffs strongly support any legislative effort to ensure the PSAP system is fully and adequately funded. This is a two-edged sword. First, adequate funding is critical in and of itself. Second, when the state underfunds PSAPs, the system must be made whole through secondary funding by cities, counties and special districts. In essence, Sheriffs and others must underfund their own vital public safety obligations in order to shore up inadequate state funding.

The 9-1-1 tax was created to support the PSAP system. Unfortunately, the legislature has taken money from the PSAP system to fund other priorities. This practice needs to stop.

Specifically, Oregon Sheriffs support:

- (1) Extending or eliminating the end date of the Emergency Communications Tax;
- (2) Modifying the Emergency Communications Tax to include prepaid mobile devices;
- (3) Ensuring monies paid into the Emergency Communications Account are used exclusively for that purpose.

Thank you for hearing this important bill. Oregon Sheriffs stand ready to assist in any way possible to ensure the PSAP system is fully and adequately funded in the 2013-15 biennial budget. Oregon Sheriffs urge the committee to give SB 597 a "do pass" recommendation to the full House of Representatives. I am happy to answer any questions.

Oregon State Sheriffs' Association

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