



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

PUBLIC SERVICES BUILDING
2051 KAEN ROAD | OREGON CITY, OR 97045

April 2, 2013

Representative Phil Barnhart, Chair
House Committee on Revenue
900 Court Street NE, Room 143
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Letter in Support of 9-1-1 Tax Reauthorization Legislation (HB 3317)

Dear Chair Barnhart & Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners, I thank you for the opportunity to express our support for HB 3317, which reauthorizes the 9-1-1 telephone tax. This legislation is critical to the stable and adequate funding of the Clackamas County Department of Communications, also known as C-COM, which provides 9-1-1 call taking and dispatch services to six law enforcement agencies and nine fire districts and departments. We also wish to express our support for closing the loophole on tax collections from prepaid wireless devices, which would restore equity and improve the stability of funding for critical 9-1-1 services.

Clackamas County supports reauthorization of the emergency communications tax, which is an essential component of the overall funding for our statewide 9-1-1 system. It provides key financial support for call centers, dispatchers, communication equipment and other costs related to maintaining the state's emergency response system. Scheduled to sunset on December 31, 2013, the tax imposes a \$0.75 per month charge on any telephone circuit capable of accessing the 9-1-1 network. In Fiscal Year 2012-13, the tax will provide \$1.441 million in revenue to C-COM, constituting over 21% of their annual budget.

Additionally, Clackamas County supports legislation to require payment of the 9-1-1 tax by users of prepaid wireless devices. Currently, prepaid wireless users do not pay the same tax levied on landline and traditional wireless users to support the 9-1-1 emergency system. The number of prepaid wireless customers is growing nationally and is now estimated to constitute 20 percent of the wireless market, costing the Oregon emergency system millions of dollars per year. Requiring prepaid wireless users to pay for 9-1-1 services just like all other wireless customers will restore equity to the funding system and provide ongoing revenue stability for local emergency operations centers.

We strongly urge your support of reauthorizing the 9-1-1 tax and closing the loophole on prepaid wireless devices. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Ludlow, Chair
On behalf of the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners