
OREGON STATE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 3317-A

Before the Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on Public Safety / May 9, 2013

By: Marion County Sheriff Jason Myers, OSSA President



Co-Chairs Winters and Williamson and members of the Subcommittee:

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 diverted money from the PSAP system to fund other priorities. Oregon Sheriffs believe that all of the funds in the Emergency Communication Account, including accruing interest, should be used only for 9-1-1 related funding.

Specifically, Oregon Sheriffs support:

- (1) Extending or eliminating the end date of the Emergency Communications Tax;
- (2) Increasing the effectiveness of collecting the tax on prepaid phones from the service providers; and
- (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 HB 3317-A a "do pass" recommendation to the full Ways & Means Committee. I am happy to answer any questions.

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