
OREGON STATE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 2035

In writing before the House Revenue Committee / March 14, 2013

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Chair Barnhart and members of the House Revenue 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.

Oregon Sheriffs apologize for not appearing in person on a topic of this magnitude. Oregon Sheriffs are gathered for a Spring Conference, which has been scheduled for some time. Otherwise, this bill would garner our strongest measure of in-person support and is one of our highest priorities this session.

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, time and again 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 holding a Public Hearing on 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 State Sheriffs' Association

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