

February 20, 2014

Chair Phil Barnhart
House Committee on Revenue
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Barnhart and members of the House Committee on Revenue:

The Oregon Fire Chiefs Association is pleased to support the -6 amendments to HB 4055, providing a mechanism for the collection of the emergency communications tax for prepaid wireless devices. As a part of the public safety community, we see the continuing increase in need for 911 services throughout the state. As that need and demand has increased, funding to support those services unfortunately has not also increased to keep pace.

Prepaid cellular telephones are an ever-increasing share of the wireless market. While users of these devices expect to have their 911 emergency calls answered, they do not currently contribute to supporting those very services they call upon. Our local 911 PSAPs (Public Safety Answering Points) are the link between the individual in distress and the public safety response system. Adequate funding for this system has to be a priority and addressing the current gap for prepaid cellular telephones is an important step.

HB 4055 with the -6 amendments provides an opportunity to begin to shore up funding for the critical emergency services that we all rely on everyday. We thank the Committee for action on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Ted Kunze
President, Oregon Fire Chiefs Association
Fire Chief/CEO, Canby Fire District