



CITY OF PORTLAND
BUREAU OF EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

Ted Wheeler, Mayor
Jo Ann Hardesty, Commissioner

Bob Cozzie, Director
Post Box 1927
Portland, Oregon 97207
503.823.0911
FAX 503.823.4630
www.portlandoregon.gov/911

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Representative Paul Evans
House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness
900 Court St., NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB2449

Chair Evans and Members of the Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

The Bureau of Emergency Communications (BOEC) is a bureau within the City of Portland providing emergency call taking and dispatch services to all of Multnomah County. BOEC answers approximately 900,000 calls a year and is responsible for accurate and timely emergency dispatch services to 3 police agencies, 4 fire agencies and the City's contracted ambulance service provider. In each of these responsibilities, BOEC is dependent upon technology and communications infrastructure.

Currently, BOEC receives funds from the state 9-1-1 tax which covers approximately 11% of our operational budget.

The 9-1-1 tax has remained at \$0.75 cents since its inception in 1995. HB2449 seeks to double the tax to more adequately support the operations of the forty-three 9-1-1 centers within the state.

Although this tax has not increased in over 20 years, operational and personnel costs have continued to incrementally increase in response to increased population and call load. Additionally, the past twenty years have brought significant technological changes with no increase in funding. At the current rate, technology cannot effectively advance, and collaboration with Oregon Emergency Management is hampered. Statewide, 9-1-1 centers do not have adequate funding to plan and implement these changes and there is little to no savings at the State level to update the critical and lifesaving infrastructure.

Although the City of Portland requests your support of HB2449 to increase the tax to \$1.50, we respectfully request that you also consider the removal of the provisions that gives 2% to counties with a population of less than 40,000 as this creates a substantial inequity in the distribution of these funds. In the current draft, many smaller centers would receive funding which exceeds their current annual budgets, while larger centers receive far less.

Additionally, the City of Portland respectfully requests that you consider reducing the amount earmarked for the Oregon Emergency Management 9-1-1 Program from 4% to 2% as well as a reduction for the Department of Revenue from 1% to .05% as the tasks involved in overseeing the collection and distribution of these funds do not increase.

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Please notify the City of Portland no less than five (5) business days prior to an event for ADA accommodations at 503-823-0911, by the City's TTY at 503-823-6868, or by the Oregon Relay Service at 1-800-735-2900.
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The additional funds collected are best utilized by the 9-1-1 centers in providing service to the public.

Furthermore, the City respectfully requests that you consider adding language to HB2449 to address the need for future savings to support the technological advances requiring significant infrastructure buildouts and improvements, known as Next Generation, or NextGen 911. As stated, the technological improvements in 9-1-1 are ongoing, and the public expects services, such as video or photo delivery, that is currently impossible due to the lack of funding to support modern technology. Adding language to ensure that the interest earned from the 911 fund is retained and placed into dedicated savings for a NextGen911 enables this vital work to occur in the future.

Thank you for taking up this important matter. I urge you to support HB 2449.

Sincerely,



Bob Cozzie
Director

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