



# POLK COUNTY

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SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Mark Garton

March 11, 2019

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

RE: Support of HB2449

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

Polk County Oregon is proudly served by Willamette Valley Communications Center (WVCC) in Salem, Oregon as the Regional Public Safety Dispatching Center (PSAP) for our area. Our contracted relationship over the years with WVCC has provided services such as call-taking, dispatching services as well as the backbone equipment like phone systems and computer aided dispatch functionality. Polk County alone would not have been able to have access to this type of equipment without the collaborated effort from our regional user agencies.

Here we are living in 2019 with a taxing model that was set back in 1995 at a rate of .75 cents. I feel strongly that we all need to be good stewards of the people's money but I'm also a believer that we owe our citizens with the best equipment and systems available that is our first line of defense in protecting people, saving lives and helping those in need. The question to ask yourself, is \$1.50 a month worth having systems in place that are up to date, have the latest technology and the ability to provide a service to myself and my family? I think we would all say yes and then some.

Polk County fully supports HB2449 to increase this outdated tax to ensure Oregon is at the forefront of technology that will give our first responders as much information as possible, to increase the safety of our first responders and ensure we can respond to our residents quickly as life depends on us.

I encourage the committee to think about what your expectations are when you call 911 with an emergency. You expect professional people answering the phone and getting you the help you need – when and where you need them and as quickly as possible because we all know, seconds do count and can those seconds can mean the difference between life and death.

With the passage of this HB, you will be part of providing a more sustainable funding model for all of our communications needs to every resident and visitor in every corner of this great State of Oregon.

In today's world, it seems like the "in" thing is to fight or argue over every issue regardless of what the issue are or how important the issue is to the quality of safety of life. This HB will benefit everybody equally and again, is something that the residents of this State expect when they make that 911 call.

Respectively submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "L. Dean Bender".

L. Dean Bender

Polk County Communications Manager