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**TO:** House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness  
**FROM:** Nicholas Green, John Day City Manager  
**SUBJECT:** Testimony in Support of HB 2449  
**DATE:** March 12, 2019  
**CC:** John Day City Council; Grant County Emergency Communications Agency

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Chair Evans, Vice-Chair Lewis, Vice-Chair Meek, Committee Members:

The City of John Day has operated Grant County's Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for the past 30 years. The PSAP employs 5.5 full-time telecommunicators, each certified by the Department of Public Safety, Standards and Training (DPSST). It is one of the smallest PSAP's in Oregon but also one of the most efficient, with an average fully-burdened cost per employee of \$76,930 in FY2018. The PSAP's service area covers all of Grant County, including nine incorporated cities and approximately two million acres of public lands frequently visited by tourists from across the state and country.

Over the past two decades, the cost-revenue gap for the PSAP grew to the point that it became operationally unstable. During a seven-year period from FY08 through FY15, state 911 tax receipts distributed to our PSAP declined year-over-year. By 2016, our PSAP was operating at 2008 tax levels (see enclosures).

In 2017, a local ballot measure to secure additional funding failed, and the John Day city council made the difficult decision to close the PSAP. A state appropriation of \$420,000 received in 2017 HB 5006 allowed us to extend the operating window for an additional two years and restructure the department under a new ORS 190, the Grant County Emergency Communications Agency. However, the current emergency communications tax continues to place an excessive financial burden on the PSAP and seriously limits our ability to provide emergency communications services that are of consistent quality with the rest of the state.

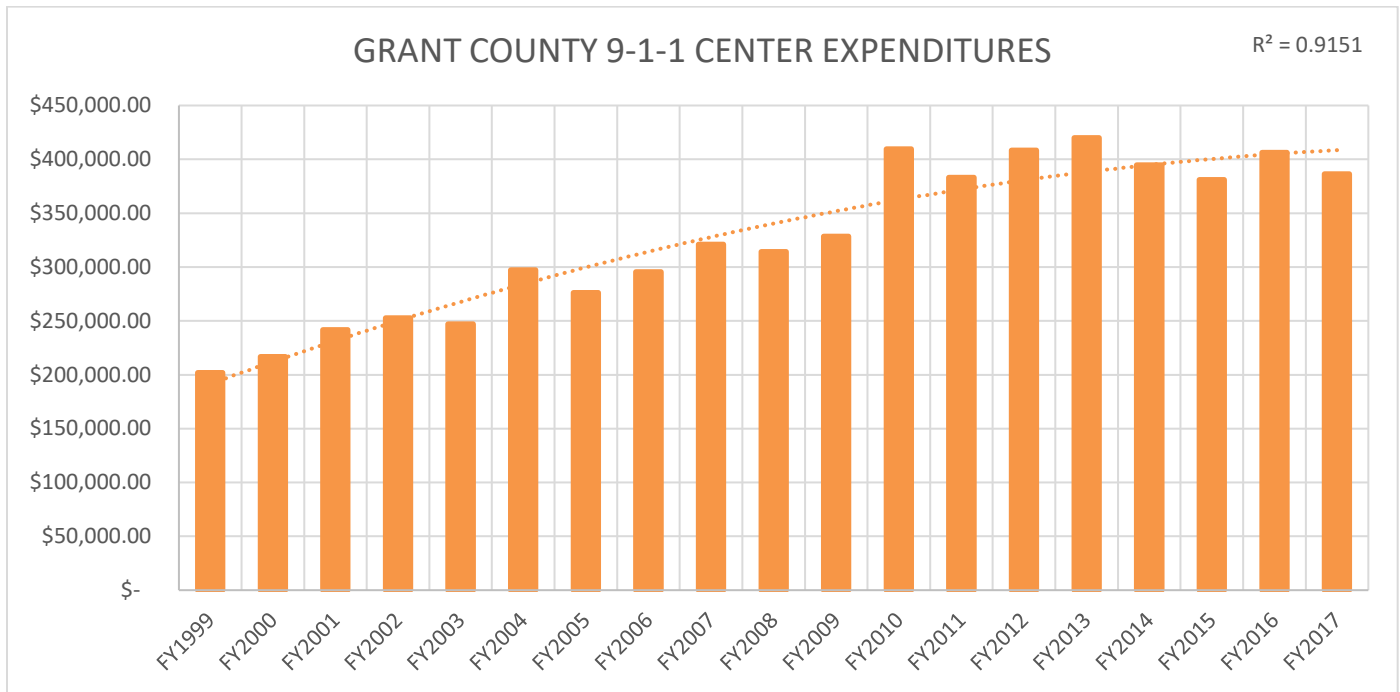
While revenue measures are rarely popular, especially in a conservative county, we heard a consistent message during our attempts to pass the local ballot measure. Residents would much rather pay an additional 75-cents per month in their phone bills than a disproportionate rate in their property tax base.

The proposal in HB 2449 would significantly increase 911 tax receipts for all PSAPs and provides additional financial security to ensure smaller PSAPs can make the strategic capital investments needed to remain sustainable and under local control. We encourage you to take those measures necessary to provide a consistent 911 user experience for all Oregon residents and visitors, regardless of where a call originates, and to preserve the ability of our smaller PSAPs to continue operating within their local jurisdictions.

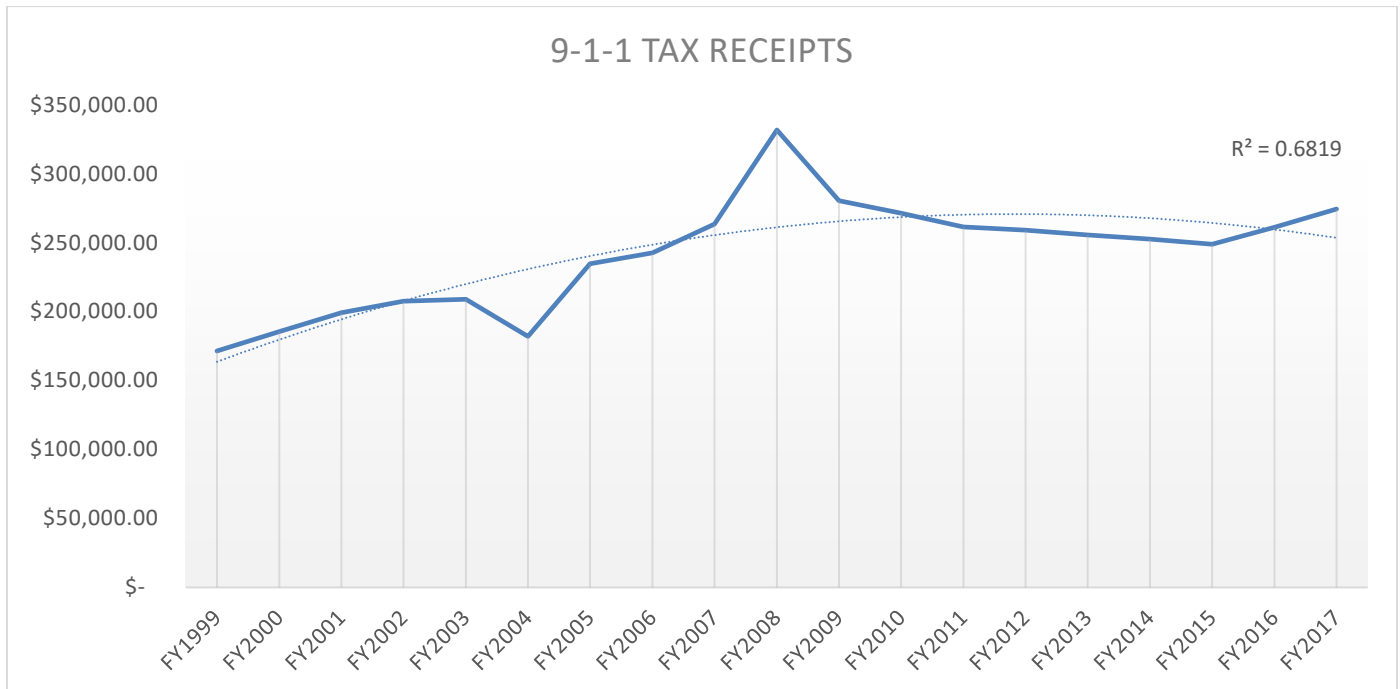
Sincerely,

Nicholas Green, City Manager

Enclosure 1. PSAP expenditures from FY99 through FY17 increased an average of \$12,000 per year.



Enclosure 2. Emergency Communications Tax receipts increased from FY99 to FY08, then declined through FY15, resulting in average annual revenue increases of less than \$5,000 per year.



Enclosure 3. The Cost-Revenue Gap continues to grow despite operating with the minimum number of staff needed to provide continuous 24/7/365 call coverage.

