



9-1-1

LAKE OSWEGO COMMUNICATIONS

Serving the communities of Lake Oswego, Milwaukie, and West Linn

March 8th, 2019

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

RE: Support for HB2449

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

Lake Oswego Communications (LOCOM) Center provides 9-1-1 call answering and public safety dispatching for 4 agencies serving the communities of Milwaukie, Lake Oswego and West Linn.

LOCOM answers approximately 1700, 9-1-1 calls per month and is extremely dependent on technology and communications infrastructure to process each of these calls. Currently funds distributed from the 9-1-1 tax covers 18% of our operational budget.

The 9-1-1 program within Oregon Emergency Management has notified me that 9-1-1 tax no longer has funds to replace equipment that is used in our center today. This cost transfer to the 9-1-1 centers has a direct impact on police, fire and medical emergency service providers and the citizens we all serve. Centers will need to weigh cost increases to user agencies, vs. decreasing phone answering positions in the center, or other cost saving strategies: call filtering or queuing of calls. The current funding model makes these difficult choices inevitable.

HB2449 seeks to increase the 9-1-1 tax to \$1.50, increasing the funds available to allow the 9-1-1 emergency communications system to "provide for the continued operation of 9-1-1 and emergency services statewide" (OAR 104-080-0000). The current tax has been in place since 1995 and the tax amount of 75 cents has not increased in 24 years. LOCOM asks for your support for HB2449. Respectfully, we ask for your consideration to remove from HB2449 the provisions that gives 2% to counties with a population less than 40,000 as this creates an inequity in the distribution among the PSAP's in Oregon, causing some to receive up to 300% of their entire budget, while other PSAP's would receive less than 20% of their budgets. We also encourage you to consider reducing the amount for Oregon Emergency Management 9-1-1 Program from 4% to 2% with this increase and reduce the amount for the Department of Revenue from 1% to .05%, as the program administration and tax collection responsibilities are not increasing, and historically have been more than adequate to cover true expenses. We would also ask your consideration to add language specifically allowing interest earned on the

9-1-1 tax to be held in an account to be used for future upgrades to our critical infrastructure, commonly known as NextGen 9-1-1. This additional step could make qualification for federal grants towards NextGen 9-1-1 expenses a possibility.

HB2449 increases revenue for the 9-1-1 emergency communications program allowing for consistent statewide access to emergency services when a call is made to 9-1-1. It will provide a more sustainable funding model for emergency communications infrastructure and staffing throughout the State of Oregon allowing Telecommunications professionals to provide the quality service citizens deserve when they call 9-1-1.

Respectfully,

Sue Scobert
Communications Manager
Lake Oswego Communications
Lake Oswego Police Department