



Grant County
Emergency Communications Agency

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Valerie Maynard, Director

March 7, 2019

Members of the House Veterans Affairs Committee,

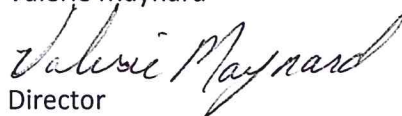
I am sending this letter in support of HB 2449 (9-1-1 tax increase). I would also request that language be added to allow interest earned on the 9-1-1 tax to be held in an account for future upgrades to 9-1-1 infrastructure (NextGen 9-1-1). And that consideration is given to reducing the amount for DAS and the OEM/9-1-1 program. As well as removing the provision that give 2 percent to counties with a population less than 40,000 be removed, since it creates and inequity in the distribution.

Due to the rise in the costs for operating our 9-1-1 Center on our very limited resources, we came very close this past year to closing our doors and outsourcing to a PSAP (9-1-1 Center) that is hours away, in another county. Our County is 4529 square miles with only one 9-1-1 Center serving the entire area.

In rural Eastern Oregon we do not have the tax base to continue to carry the burden of the cost associated with running our 9-1-1 Centers. This is forcing some of the small Centers to discontinue providing the service, which not only affects the local citizens but also any visitors that may need the service. When the 9-1-1 service was first implemented in the State of Oregon it was done so in an attempt to provide the same service, border to border in the State. If the 9-1-1 tax does not increase, Centers like ours will not be able to continue to hang on and will likely be forced to close their doors.

The cost to do business continues to rise every year and yet we are still operating on a tax that is 24 years old. We do not have the resources to pull from in our rural county to support the increased cost share burden that is being put on our residents. We implore you to support HB 2449.

Sincerely,
Valerie Maynard


Director