



ROGUE VALLEY FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION
8383 AGATE RD.
WHITE CITY, OR 97503

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,

The Josephine County 9-1-1 Agency has served the citizens, commuters, and visitors of Josephine County through the receipt and dispatch or transfer of emergency calls since 1987, and answers approximately 4,200 9-1-1 calls per month, as well as necessary follow up calls, call entry, and other tasks required to complete the link of the citizens in need to appropriate emergency services.

The Rogue Valley Fire Chiefs Association wishes to relay support of HB2449. This important legislation will help ensure adequate funding for 9-1-1 operations throughout the state.

The Josephine County 9-1-1 Agency has experienced an increase in use of 22% since 2007. With this increase of call volume, the agency has had to increase staffing and update technology. The costs associated with these improvements has climbed sharply over the years, however, the 9-1-1 tax has not been increased since 1995. As such, the funding collected by these taxes is no longer enough to sustain basic system upgrades nor meet the increasing demand of services provided by Josephine County 9-1-1 Agency. If additional funding is not attained, the shift in expenses will inevitably be passed on to our emergency response agencies and is likely to price some fire districts out of dispatching services.

We are requesting your support of HB 22449 to increase the 9-1-1 tax rate to \$ 1.50 and to extend the sunset of the tax. We respectfully ask that you consider revision of the following provisions from HB 2449:

- Removal of the provision that provides 2% to counties with a population less than 40,000
- Amend the amount for Oregon Emergency Management 9-1-1 program from 4% to 2%
- Reduce the amount collected by the Department of Revenue from 1% to .05%
- Addition of language to allow interest earned on the 9-1-1 tax to be held in an account to be utilized for future system upgrades.

It is clear HB 2449 will ensure the safety of our citizens, communities and visitors, who rely on the 9-1-1 system and guarantees an opportunity for Oregon 9-1-1 centers to be adequately staffed and equipped in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael McLaughlin".

Michael McLaughlin

Vice President

Rogue Valley Fire Chief's Association
