



Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District

April 18, 2019

Providing 9-1-1 call answering, emergency dispatch and other support services for:

Clatskanie Fire & Medical
City of Clatskanie (Sheriff's Office)
Columbia River Fire & Rescue
Rainier Police
Columbia City Police
St. Helens Police
Columbia County Sheriff
Scappoose Fire & Medical
Scappoose Police
Vernonia Fire & Medical
Vernonia Police
Metro-West Ambulance
Mist-Birkenfeld Fire & Medical

Oregon State Police
Oregon State Forestry, Columbia Unit
Columbia Co. Community Corrections
Columbia Co. District Attorney
Columbia Co. Emergency Management
Columbia Co. Juvenile Department
Columbia Co. Road Department
Columbia Community Mental Health
PGE Trojan Facility

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Zone 1 (Clatskanie), Dee Wooley
Zone 2 (Rainier), Sean Clark
Zone 3 (St. Helens), Henry Heimuller
Zone 4 (Vernonia-Mist), Dave Crawford
Zone 5 (Scappoose), Rob Anderson

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Representative Nancy Nathanson, Chair
House Committee on Revenue
900 Court St, NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE Support of HB2449

Chair Nathanson, Members of the House Revenue Committee:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District and the law enforcement, fire and EMS agencies we serve in Columbia County, we strongly endorse and respectfully request your assistance with the passage of HB2449.

As you may be aware, the current 9-1-1 tax imposed on all landline and wireless communication devices has not seen any change in its taxable rate of .75/month in nearly 25 years. You may not be aware of the impact this has had on all Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP = 9-1-1 Center) over this nearly one quarter of a century.

Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District is not unusual in that the current monies received via the State of Oregon and the 9-1-1 tax covers only 20% of our overall costs of doing business.

When one compares the economics of costs and services from 1995 (the date of the last adjustment to the 9-1-1 tax) to 2019 it is hard to reconcile how the average citizen of the State of Oregon would expect any household or business to operate without any increase in revenue. A few examples for your review:

- Average cost of a new home:

1995 - \$158,700.00

2018 – \$326,800.00 (Census.gov)

- Medium Household Income:

1995 - \$34,076.00

2018 – \$62,262.00 (Census.gov)

- 1-gallon regular unleaded gas:

1995 - \$1.15

2018 – \$2.62 (bls.gov)

During this past calendar year, OEM began to have conversations with PSAP managers about significant fiscal shortfalls in both of the 9-1-1 excise accounts. Immediately OEM began a process to change language within the OAR's that speak to the way 9-1-1 excise tax funds are to be distributed and exactly what and how these distributions pay for features and functions and the formulas behind them.

The office of Emergency Management has thus notified all PSAP's that cost savings from the discontinuation of certain formerly funded components found within our centers would now be passed on to the local 9-1-1 centers. This process of defunding certain aspects of our equipment, maintenance of other equipment and the potential for new items to be discontinued to be funded during this next fiscal year is very real.

For Columbia 9-1-1 we have been notified that the State will no longer fund the on-going maintenance for 1 of our existing 5 emergency call taking equipment. Further, the State will no longer fund our ability to transfer all of our emergency 9-1-1 telephone lines to either a backup dispatch center or to another neighboring 9-1-1 center should we need to evacuate our facility. OEM has gone so far as to provide the 9-1-1 managers 18 other potential cuts in funding that they may enact this year.

The results of these known cuts of funding from the State as well as any new cuts yet to be announced, presents all 9-1-1 centers in Oregon a choice. Do we as a local community based 9-1-1 center choose to cut back on service despite rising demand? Or, shall we choose to self-fund these cutbacks and budget additional funds for any new unanticipated shortfalls?

Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District is requesting your support of HB2449 to increase the 9-1-1 tax to \$1.50 and extend the sunset of the tax

It is our sincere hope we can depend on you to consider adding language that would specifically allow interest earned on the 9-1-1 tax to be held in an account to be used for future system upgrades. With the addition of this language, we can begin the savings which are needed to fund our future 9-1-1 needs as it related to technology, infrastructure buildout and security.

HB2449 will help us ensure the communities we serve that they can continue to depend on their 9-1-1 service. We request your immediate assistance as we believe this tax would help support us in continuing the critical and vital service we provide to our communities at the highest possible levels.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Fletcher". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Michael Fletcher, Executive Director
Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District