



To: Members of the House Revenue Committee

From: Sheriff Jason Myers, Marion County Sheriff's Office
Oregon State Sheriffs' Association
Chief Jim Ferraris, Woodburn Police Department
Oregon Association Chiefs of Police

Date: April 22nd, 2019

Re: Support for HB 2449 A Engrossed – 911 Emergency Communications Funding

Chair Nathanson and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon State Sheriff's Association and the Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police, we are pleased to express our strong support for HB 2449 A.

As written, House Bill 2449 would increase the 911 telecommunication tax revenue which supports Oregon's 911 telephone system infrastructure as well as Public Safety Answering Points (Police, Fire and EMS dispatch centers) across the state. As you can imagine the costs for maintaining and upgrading the statewide 911 system and the costs associated with operating Public Safety Answering Points has increased substantially over the 20 years while this tax has remained the same. These cost increases have been passed along to local Police, Fire and EMS agencies in the form of user fees. Any increase in the 911 telecommunication tax revenue that is distributed to the local Public Safety Answering Point will help lower the cost for Police, Fire and EMS in terms of the user fees they pay. Any savings in these user fees can be redirected to enhance first responder/public safety resources and personnel.

Oregon currently has the unfortunate distinction of having the lowest level of police staffing in the United States. The Oregon State Police is 48th out of 49 states that have a highway patrol function in troopers per 100,000 population and our city and county law enforcement staffing levels are the lowest in the nation. As a result, significant portions of the State of Oregon are without 24 hour coverage.

Your Oregon Sheriffs and Chiefs are committed to providing excellence in public safety services to the Communities we serve in this state. We believe that House Bill 2449 help us achieve this goal, through supporting the very important 911 telecommunication infrastructure and the Public Safety Answering Points that accept the 911 emergency calls and direct Police, Fire and EMS services to where they are needed. It is for this reason we strongly support House Bill 2449 A.