



April 22, 2019

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

RE: Support of HB 2449

Chair Nathanson, Members of the House Revenue Committee:

My name is Margie Moulin, and I am the Director of Emergency Communications of Southern Oregon (ECSO), which is the consolidated 9-1-1 and dispatch agency formed under ORS 190, and funded by the 9-1-1 tax and our subscriber agencies consisting of police, fire and EMS agencies throughout Jackson County and Crater Lake National Park.

I began my career with Southern Oregon Regional Communications (SORC) in 1991, which, at that time, was one of four (4) 9-1-1 centers in Jackson County. In 1995 when the 9-1-1 tax was passed at 75-cents, every call we took was handwritten into a spiral notebook, and information placed on handwritten case cards, or fire or medical cards. We had a single monitor we used only for finding information for law enforcement. Everything else was done manually. While this was much less expensive, it was also inefficient, and slow.

In 2000, SORC purchased our first Computer Aided Dispatch System, which is the computerized system in which all incoming information is entered and immediately sent to the appropriate dispatcher to send help. This system is also used to find any information needed by law enforcement such as warrants and warrants, and allows us to track all of our responding units.

During this same time period, we upgraded our phone systems to a modern, computerized phone system, and implemented software allowing dispatchers to quickly go through emergency medical dispatch protocols to determine response levels, and provide pre arrival medical information to callers to provide immediate help to a patient prior to the responders' arrival.

All of these technological advances provide for faster, more efficient service to citizens during an emergency. These are critical systems that have shaved minutes off of the time between the time the call is received, and the information is provided to responders. In our business, minutes, and even seconds can make a significant difference in the outcome of an emergency. Largely due to these technological advancements, and increased personnel costs, between 1995 and 2010, SORC experienced a 301% increase in expenses.

In 2010, SORC, and the only other remaining PSAP in Jackson County, RVCCOM, consolidated into a single PSAP, becoming ECSO. This consolidation was agreed upon by all parties involved, in an attempt to create even more efficiencies, and streamline responses for our callers in Jackson County. Because both SORC and RVCCOM were medium sized centers, handling all of the 9-1-1 calls in Jackson County, there was not a significant savings involved in this consolidation.

Since consolidation in 2010, ECSO has seen an additional increase in expenses of 41 percent. As the expenses increased, our local public safety partners were forced to pay higher portions of our budget to meet expenses.

In addition to the increase in technology, we are now facing even more expenses to maintain service levels to our communities due to recent changes in OAR that now minimize the number of our critical phone services that are eligible for payment from the 9-1-1 tax sub account designed to cover these expenses.

Currently, the 9-1-1 tax covers only 16 percent of our budget, while our police and fire subscribers provide the remaining 84 percent. These public safety agencies are struggling with their own increases in budget and are being forced to look for new ways to find funding for critical infrastructure due to the rise in cost each year to support 9-1-1.

While my testimony today provides information of the effect on ECSOs budget, similar impacts can be seen in PSAPs across Oregon. As costs increase to serve our public, we are more and more reliant on our local public safety partners in police, fire and ems, to provide funding while also struggling to fund their own critical needs for police, fire and EMS staffing and technologies.

We are approaching 25 years without an increase in the 75-cent tax supporting 9-1-1. I am here today on behalf of ECSO asking for your backing for our emergency services to our citizens, by supporting this long overdue increase in the 9-1-1 tax as outlined in HB 2449.

Thank you,

Margie Moulin, RPL, CPE
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