



POLICE DEPARTMENT

555 Liberty St. SE / Room 130 • Salem, OR 97301-3513 • (503) 588-6123

April 22, 2019

Honorable Nancy Nathanson, Chair
Honorable Lynn Findley, Vice-Chair
Honorable Pam Marsh, Vice-Chair
Oregon House Committee on Revenue
Oregon State Legislature
Salem, Oregon

RE: Support of House Bill 2449, the emergency communications tax for the 9-1-1 system

Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Findley and Marsh, and Committee Members:

The City of Salem operates a regional 9-1-1 dispatch center, known as the Willamette Valley Communications Center (WVCC), and provides emergency 9-1-1 service in Marion, Polk and Lincoln counties. We operate the third largest 9-1-1 center in the state.

The size of our operation is a result of several consolidations over the past 30 years, with the intent to be as efficient and effective, with our limited resources, as possible. At WVCC, we answer more than 170,000 emergency 9-1-1 calls per year. We are extremely dependent on our skilled staff, technology, backup systems, and the communications infrastructure necessary to process these calls every time the public calls us for help.

The cost of providing 9-1-1 service, at the level the public expects, continues to increase every single year. The cost of technology, health care, retirement, and infrastructure maintenance all continue to rise. Our average annual cost increase over the past twenty (20) years has been 4.1% per year. That is an 80% increase in just twenty years. The 9-1-1 tax has never been increased!

This simply results in our member agencies subsidizing more of the 9-1-1 system. We provide 9-1-1 service for three (3) sheriff's offices, eight (8) police departments, and eighteen (18) fire and emergency medical service (EMS) providers, across three counties. The cost of our operation, not covered by the 9-1-1 tax revenue, comes from the "general fund" of each of these departments. The more they must subsidize the 9-1-1 system, the less they have for their own personnel costs.

Today, our police, fire, and EMS agencies are paying 81% of the 9-1-1 system and the 9-1-1 tax is only covering 19%. We simply can't continue in this direction.

We urge you to support and vote in favor of passing HB 2449-A as is.

Respectively submitted,

Gerald F. Moore
Chief of Police

Mark W. Buchholz
9-1-1 Communications Director