



## **OREGON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS COUNCIL**

International Association of Fire Fighters  
AFL-CIO CLC

Chair Haas, Co Chair Bentz and Committee Members,

For the record, my name is Karl Koenig, President of the Oregon State Fire Fighters Council and a Captain Paramedic for over 30 years in Clackamas County.

Our testimony today is in support of HB 2449B, the increase in the Cell Phone tax .25 cents each January for two years. The amendments before you today reflect the hard work of all local government agencies along with the Office of Emergency Management at the State.

As a user of 911 on the other side of the Chain of Survival, the finances are the last thing we think of as firefighters and paramedics when the bells strike, when in reality the monies proposed in this bill allow for priorities in human assets remain on the front line responding to calls for help.

Each 911 PSAP in Oregon has fee based usage charges to the Fire Departments, Fire Districts, Law Enforcement, Emergency Management that pay for a majority of the costs to run this Public Safety necessity at a very high level. Enhanced 911 State wide is not free, locating cell phone callers is not free. The technology is not free. This charge has not increased since 1995. During the same time frame fuel in Oregon was on average a \$1.09 a gallon, now approximately \$3.00 a gallon.

No one likes taxes, even fewer like tax increases, but this is a must have for the Public Safety providers and the public at large. Every user dollar we don't spend on 911 fees translates into keeping responders on the street. In turn helping those callers to one of the 43 Public Safety Answering Points throughout Oregon to get resources on the way.

The public's safety is a primary function of Government. Being able to pick up the phone and request help is paramount to getting help where it needs to be. Responsible government knows that high performing public safety is a trust issue and

we must not break that trust by underfunding the beginning of the “Chain of Survival” process.

Your firefighters urge a yes vote on HB 2449B in Committee to adequately fund 911 throughout all of Oregon.

Respectfully,

*Karl Koenig /s*

Karl Koenig  
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