



HB 3069
House Committee on Revenue
Testimony in Opposition
Brant Wolf
Oregon Telecommunications Association

The Oregon Telecommunications Association (OTA) represents a variety of telecommunications service providers operating throughout Oregon. Our members serve Oregonians living throughout rural, remote and urban Oregon. The OTA does not represent wireless or cable providers.

The OTA recognizes the importance of the establishment of a national 9-8-8 number to connect those in need with the National Suicide Prevention Hotline. Our members are ready and able to do the necessary work to accomplish this goal well in advance of the July 2022 deadline. ***There is no need to pass any type of legislation in Oregon for this to occur.***

I want to be clear about the OTA position on HB 3069. We do not oppose the bill entirely, only section 5 relating to the establishment of a new tax unrelated to telecommunications services. Access to suicide prevention and mental health services is an important function of state government, a function that the legislature should ensure is funded with General Fund dollars or the recently available funds from the Federal Government. The OTA has no comment or position on the rest of HB 3069.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) mandated the establishment of a simple three digit number to connect those in need with the National Suicide Prevention Hotline. This must be accomplished by July 16, 2022. Following that date Oregonians will be able to connect with one of the 170 plus centers currently operated by the National Suicide Prevention Hotline.

The OTA believes that HB 3069 goes far beyond the FCC order mandating 9-8-8. The OTA also believes that the bill goes beyond what Congress detailed in the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 (the Act).

The Act and the FCC Order require the implementation of 9-8-8. The OTA believes that no further action is needed and no state level legislation needs to be enacted in order to ensure that 9-8-8 happens prior to July 16, 2022. As mentioned, our members will of course comply.

Additionally, it is important to recall that the Legislature recently increased the 9-1-1 fee from .75 cents per line or wireless device to \$1.25, a 50% increase. And in June of 2020 the legislature adopted a brand new fee on wireless devices and VoIP service to fund the Oregon Universal Service Fund. That fee is 5% of the portion of a bill related to voice service only.

Also, HB 3069 differs from other government mandated three digit numbers in that the fee pays for the service once the number is dialed and the call has been completed. For example, when 9-1-1 is dialed the fee pays for the proper routing of the call. The 9-1-1 fee does not pay for the fire or law enforcement response. However, HB 3069 would implement the new tax to pay for call routing as well as the needed services. The OTA believes that the proper source of funding for mental health services needed by Oregonians is the state's General Fund.

For these reasons we ask that this Committee strike language creating a new tax by adopting an amendment striking section 5 from HB 3069.