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**To: House Committee On Veterans and Emergency Management**

**From: Sheriff Curtis Landers, Lincoln County Sheriff's Office**  
On behalf of the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association and the  
Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police  
[clanders@co.lincoln.or.us](mailto:clanders@co.lincoln.or.us)

**Date:** February 24, 2021

**Re: Testimony re HB 2425 – 911 Consolidation Incentive Funding**

**Chair Evans and members of the committee,**

For the record, my name is Curtis Landers and I am the Lincoln County Sheriff testifying on behalf of the Oregon State Sheriff's Association and the Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police. Thank you for your time and opportunity to present to you today in support of House Bill 2425.

We support the concept in the bill to incentivize voluntary Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) consolidation efforts. Currently, there are 43 9-1-1 centers known as PSAPs in the state of Oregon. 9-1-1 tax dollars are provided to these centers through Oregon Emergency Management to partially fund these centers.

Consolidation efforts have been going on for years. Consolidation creates financial and response time efficiencies among other benefits. Some agencies are reluctant to consider consolidations because of the initial up-front equipment and planning costs to make it happen.

Nearly 10 years ago I was involved in a project to dissolve LinCom dispatch center in Lincoln County and consolidate with Willamette Valley Communications Center in Salem. The initial cost and work, along with negative political influence was tremendous, but the benefits to this day substantially exceed anything negative. The Sheriff's Office is still paying less for improved and enhanced services, even with increased operational costs, almost 10 years later.

While I provided a positive example in Lincoln County I can also let you know that similar to other counties in Oregon, our County is not fully consolidated. There are still two other small centers in the County providing 9-1-1 answering services and this creates significant hardship for responding public safety personnel and also confusion among dispatch centers. If someone dials 9-1-1 outside of one of cities with a 9-1-1 center the cell phone could route to the small center. That center is then required to transfer the call to our primary center for the correct response, which causes significant delays and confusion for the caller in a life or death situation.

It can also cause confusion when multiple public safety agencies are needed. For example, if the small center takes the 9-1-1 call and dispatched the local law enforcement, but the response also requires an ambulance. The center must transfer the call to the larger center and “when seconds count” you can see how this could endanger lives.

House Bill 2425 would provide centers with resources to plan and upgrade equipment for consolidation. This will provide incentives for 9-1-1 centers to strongly consider consolidation to provide the best, safest, and efficient service to the public and public safety professionals.

One area of concern we want to point out is to ensure that the funding for this bill is in addition to current funding allocated for 9-1-1 centers to operate. We would not support this bill if funds were redirected from centers in order to fund this. It will be helpful to create additional clarity in the measure to regarding how the matching grant will be structured, the entity tasked with managing the grant program and how decisions will be made about grant awards and distribution.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify in support of House Bill 2425 and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Thank you for your consideration.