



John Day
Emergency
Communications
Center

450 E. Main Street
John Day, Oregon 97845
Telephone: (541) 575-0030
Fax: 541-575-1721

Chair Barnhart, Members of House Revenue Committee:

On behalf of the John Day Emergency 9-1-1 Communications Center, I am asking for your support to reauthorize the 9-1-1 telephone tax. Our Center provides 9-1-1 call answering and dispatch services to all of the police, fire and medical responders, within the 4,529 square miles that our county covers.

For over 30 years, the 9-1-1 Telephone Tax has provided critical funding to support and implement 9-1-1 services to all of Oregon. In today's world, Oregon's 9-1-1 Centers are facing challenges attempting to catch up to the rapidly changing technology. The various ways in which to access 9-1-1 either today or in the future, all present their own unique set of issues; VoIP (Voice over internet Protocol), devices which will allow people to dial 9-1-1 from their PDA, pagers, etc, all with the expectation that their call will be routed to the correct 9-1-1 center, with their location information attached; however, today, this is not the case. As more and more technology emerges, it is critical that we are able to keep pace with these challenges for the safety and welfare of all. Reauthorizing this tax will ensure funding for the next several years to implement and support the necessary equipment required to perform these essential tasks. People will always need emergency services.

The 9-1-1 program has demonstrated its value, particularly in rural Oregon and its assistance to local governments year after year. The Legislature always reviews the 9-1-1 Program budget and can guarantee accountability through program evaluation anytime it wishes. We believe that it is in the best interest of all to reduce the time and energy spent every few years to come before the Legislature to renew a tax that has gained broad-based acceptance by the public who expect their emergency calls to be answered and responded to in an expedient and professional manner. Therefore, on behalf of the John Day Emergency 9-1-1 Communications Center, I ask for your support in removing the sunset on this tax, which will provide permanent funding for this critical program that serves all of our residents and constituencies across the state.

We support the extension of the current 9-1-1 tax at the \$.75 per month level, which is assessed currently. Filed legislative concepts call for the extension of this tax through January 2026 and clarify the inclusion of the pre-paid cellular devices under this statute. The Oregon Department of Justice, Legislative counsel and the Oregon Department of Revenue concur that pre-paid cellular devices are included in the Emergency Communications Tax (9-1-1 tax) and collection of those funds should begin immediately in order to support the 9-1-1 system that is being utilized on behalf of those consumers on a daily basis. We support these legislative concepts and overall strengthening of the 9-1-1 system via extension and clarification of the Emergency Communications Tax for the benefit and safety of all Oregonians.

The John Day Emergency 9-1-1 Communications Center joins Oregon APCO/NENA and the Public Safety Answering Points throughout Oregon in support of legislation to require the prepaid wireless phone industry to support the Oregon 9-1-1 Program.

Respectfully,
Valerie Luttrell

Communications Manager