

SB 651 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/27, 3/6

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Appropriates \$800,000 General Fund dollars to the Oregon Military Department (OMD) for distribution to counties to obtain analog encoders to enable broadcasters to receive information in emergencies. Appropriates \$300,000 General Fund dollars to OMD for Oregon Public Broadcasting to maintain parts of its signal distribution system. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2019.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Emergency Alert System operation
- Critical weakness of internet-dependency after a catastrophic disaster

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

[-1 amendment] Increases appropriation to obtain analog encoders from \$800,000 to \$1,600,000.

BACKGROUND:

The Emergency Alert System allows county and state emergency managers to disseminate information about emergencies to the public. Broadcasters throughout the state operate equipment to transmit emergency alerts. Before 9/11 the system was based on a series of encoders and decoders at the local level that were capable of transmitting and receiving information without electricity or the internet. The events of 9/11 overwhelmed the system, leading to the development of a nationwide Common Alerting Protocol (CAP). The current system is digital, internet-dependent, and requires electricity. In the aftermath of a catastrophic event like a Cascadia earthquake, when electricity and internet are compromised or unavailable, state and local authorities will rely on the previous, aging analog system to communicate critical information.

Senate Bill 651 appropriates General Fund dollars to the Oregon Military Department for counties to obtain analog encoders and to maintain emergency alert distribution infrastructure.