



March 12, 2019

House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: House Bill 2449 Increases rate of tax for emergency communications.

Dear Chair Evans, Vice-Chair Lewis, Vice-Chair Meek and members of the House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness,

As Mayor of Beaverton and president of Washington County Consolidated Communications Agency Board (WCCCA), public safety is one of my top priorities. I would like to express our strong support for HB 2449.

The 9-1-1 emergency services tax increase provides critical funding for Oregon's 9-1-1 emergency reporting system. This tax increase supports the system's overall effectiveness by financing maintenance, operational and improvement costs. WCCCA delivers 9-1-1 service and public safety communications for police, fire and emergency medical service for Beaverton and other participating jurisdictions.

The Agency relies on the 9-1-1 tax as an important funding source for emergency services. Yet today, the 9-1-1 tax covers just 20% of the costs of those emergency services. The participating jurisdictions must pick up the rest of the costs with general fund dollars in order to ensure public safety.

The 9-1-1 tax is long overdue for an increase, and the additional revenue generated by HB 2449 would help offset the general fund operating costs for participating jurisdictions. Initial estimates are that HB 2449 could increase emergency communications' revenue almost a \$1 million per year. The population WCCCA serves has grown considerably over the past 10 years and additional growth is expected. In 2018, the agency received a total of 515,690 calls, a steady increase over each year.

It is therefore critical that the 9-1-1 tax be increased to support the agency's financial needs so that WCCCA can continue to meet this service demand. I encourage the committee to include language that would allow interest earned on the 9-1-1 tax to be held in an account for future upgrades to the infrastructure. I also urge you to amend the current bill to extend the sunset on the tax by ten years. This will help ensure a crucial source of funding for emergency services and statewide public safety remains stable in the years to come.

For all of these reasons, I urge your support HB 2449.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denny Doyle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Denny Doyle
Mayor