



**Testimony Before the House Revenue Committee
Relating to Support of HB 2449 A
April 22, 2019**

Submitted by Jim McCauley, Legislative Director League of Oregon Cities

Chair Nathanson and Vice-Chairs Findley Marsh and Members of the Committee:

The funding increase proposed within HB 2449 A without question will allow for additional investment into 911 communications across Oregon. As you know 911 revenues generated from hardline, and wireless products account for less than 25 percent of the facility operations at the local level in either local government run facilities or the network of Public Safety Answering Point (PSAPs) in Oregon. The added revenue will help stabilize the operations in rural communities across Oregon. Funding stability is critical for the daily operational needs of many 911 facilities in rural Oregon.

911 fees have not been increased since 1995, yet costs related to implementing a state-wide digital network, text-to-911 service, hardware upgrades, software needs, increased staffing to handle call volume, and virtually every other cost associated with running a 911 facility. The revenue side of the equation however has not kept up with this added cost, because revenue distribution is reliant on the additional phones added to the system and not call volume.

As part of the League of Oregon Cities vetting process with members a constant theme emerged over the support of policies and funding packages intended to invest in rural communities across Oregon. HB 2449 A fits this vision from the League and the following bills fit into the rural investment vision supported by the League.

Oregon's Office of Emergency Management recently prepared a project list and timeline for technology improvements across Oregon. Even with the increase of \$0.75 to the monthly fee, OEM projects years to complete the needed improvements.

The discussion over HB 2449 A is timed perfectly with the ongoing budget conversations taking place across Oregon's local governments. We are well aware of the difficulty many communities are having when evaluating budgets related to public safety. Without the additional revenue coming forward many communities may well have to choose between staffing for police and maintaining operations at 911 centers.

The LOC is asking for your support of HB 2449 A. It's a needed investment that is long overdue.