



Central Oregon Cities Organization

Bend, Culver, La Pine, Madras, Maupin
Metolius, Prineville, Redmond, Sisters

March 20, 2019

State of Oregon Representatives Findley, Lively, and Marsh
House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness
Salem, Oregon

Subject: **Support of HB 2449** – A bill increasing the rate of tax for emergency communication

Dear Representative Findley, Representative Lively, and Representative Marsh:

The Central Oregon Cities Organization (COCO) is supportive of House Bill 2449. We believe that passage of HB 2449 will provide sustainable funding essential for 9-1-1 operations throughout the State of Oregon.

1. Need for adjustment for inflation: The current 9-1-1 wireless phone tax has not been modified since its inception in 1995 since at \$0.75/month. Additionally, the State of Oregon is among the lowest in the country for wireless 9-1-1 taxes. HB 2449 recognizes the need for inflation adjustment.
2. Rising cost of 911 dispatch centers: Many jurisdictions across Central Oregon need help to keep up with the rising costs of 9-1-1 operations. Driving the need are personnel costs including PERS obligations and upgrading equipment to improve emergency communications coverage. HB 2449 will help make sure 9-1-1 operations are sustainable going forward.
3. Ability to maintain levels of service: Central Oregon is a popular tourist destination and has a high level of tourism that travels to and through the region. This populous activity also drives an increasing level of economic development for the area. For Central Oregon to serve new growth while providing a high level of emergency service communications for the region, adjusting the wireless phone fee is crucial.

HB 2449 legislation adjusts a much-needed funding source to make sure Oregon cities are not overwhelmed in helping fund 9-1-1 operations.

Sincerely,

George Endicott
Central Oregon Cities Organization Chair

George Endicott, Chair
Central Oregon Cities Organization
(541) 948-3219
George.Endicott@ci.redmond.or.us

Doug Riggs, Lobbyist
NW Grassroots & Communications
(503) 702-5120
doug@ngrc.com