



CITY OF PORTLAND
BUREAU OF EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

Ted Wheeler, Mayor
Jo Ann Hardesty, Commissioner

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June 18, 2019

Senate Finance and Revenue Committee
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Committee Chair Hass and Committee Members:

The City of Portland's Bureau of Emergency Communications (BOEC) provides emergency call taking and dispatch services to all of Multnomah County. BOEC answers approximately 900,000 calls for service each year. We are responsible for accurate and timely emergency dispatch services for Portland, Gresham and Multnomah County police agencies, as well as for Portland, Gresham, Corbet and Sauvie Island fire agencies, and the City's contracted ambulance service provider, American Medical Response. In each of these responsibilities, BOEC is highly dependent upon technology and communications infrastructure to provide adequate service to our community, and to emergency responders.

As you are aware, the 9-1-1 tax has remained unchanged at \$0.75 cents since its inception in 1995. The cost of personnel, equipment, and daily operations has increased, and there have been significant advances in technology that provide an increased level of service, security, and access. Unfortunately, the revenue received from the current tax no longer supports even basic needs related to acquisition and maintenance of critical lifesaving infrastructure. Furthermore, there is currently no funding strategy in Oregon to prepare for advanced technology such as Next-Generation 911, which is becoming a reality in other states.

Currently, BOEC receives approximately 11% of our operating budget from the state 9-1-1 tax. Without an increase in these funds, our center, along with all other 911 centers in the state, will be forced to continue to operate with increasingly antiquated and unsupported equipment and infrastructure. This is not in the best interest of the communities we serve.

The City of Portland strongly urges your supports of HB2449 to incrementally increase the 9-1-1 tax over the next two-years.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bob Cozzie,
Director

Integrity – Respect – Competence – Compassion – Responsibility – Teamwork

Please notify the City of Portland no less than five (5) business days prior to an event for ADA accommodations at 503-823-0911, by the City's TTY at 503-823-6868, or by the Oregon Relay Service at 1-800-735-2900.

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