SB 651 A   STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

Action Date:	03/06/19
Action:	Do pass with amendments. Refer to Ways and Means by prior reference. (Printed A-Eng).
Vote:	3-0-1-0
Yeas:	3 - Boquist, Monnes Anderson, Olsen
Exc:	1 - President Courtney
Fiscal:	Fiscal impact issued
Revenue:	No revenue impact
Prepared By:	C. Ross, LPRO Analyst
Meeting Dates:	2/27, 3/6

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Appropriates $1,600,000 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:

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