

HB 2449 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

Action Date: 04/04/19

Action: Without recommendation as to passage, with amendments, and be referred to Revenue by prior reference. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 7-1-0-0

Yeas: 7 - Evans, Findley, Lewis, Meek, Neron, Wilde, Zika

Nays: 1 - Wallan

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: Revenue impact issued

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Meeting Dates: 3/12, 4/4

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Increases taxes for emergency communications. Reduces limit on amount of reimbursement for administrative costs for Oregon Emergency Management from four percent to two percent, and Department of Revenue from one percent to one-half of one percent. Extends sunset from 2022 to 2030. Specifies that interest earned by the Emergency Communications Account and the 9-1-1 Subaccount must be credited to the 9-1-1 Subaccount.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Inability for 9-1-1 service providers to keep up with increasing costs
- Consolidation of services
- Past legislative practice of "sweeping" Emergency Communications Fund
- Significant technology increases since tax was last increased
- Transition from land lines to mobile phones means many households pay more than in the past
- Infrastructure needs of 9-1-1 system

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Deletes provisions adjusting minimum percentage counties must receive. Reduces limit on amount of reimbursement for administrative costs for Oregon Emergency Management from four percent to two percent, and Department of Revenue from one percent to one-half of one percent. Extends sunset from 2022 to 2030. Specifies that interest earned by the Emergency Communications Account and the 9-1-1 Subaccount must be credited to the 9-1-1 Subaccount.

BACKGROUND:

The three-digit telephone number 9-1-1 has been designated as the universal emergency number for citizens throughout the United States to request emergency assistance. It traces its origins to 1957, when the National Association of Fire Chiefs recommended usage of a single number for reporting fires; in 1967, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice recommended that a single number for reporting emergency situations was preferable to using different numbers for each type of emergency.

The Emergency Communications Tax, commonly referred to as the 9-1-1 Tax in Oregon, is assessed at 75 cents per phone line or per device capable of reaching 9-1-1. The tax is collected quarterly by the Oregon Department of Revenue.