



OREGON COMBINED CHAPTERS OF:  
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*Our Vision: "Embrace a vibrant and growing organization characterized by member support, professional development and stakeholder education."*

**Testimony in Support of HB 2927  
 House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management  
 February 11, 2021**

The Oregon Association of Public Safety Communications Officials and National Emergency Number Association (APCO/NENA) represents the 9-1-1 centers in Oregon. Emergency Communications Centers (ECC's) have varied relationships with local Emergency Management Agencies, however, each has a very specific relationship with the State's Office of Emergency Management 9-1-1 Program, currently a division of the Oregon Military Department.

Overall, our association feels reorganization of Emergency Management is necessary to ensure that Oregon is better positioned to respond to and recover from various emergencies and disasters as well as prepare for the future of 9-1-1 in Oregon. A properly funded and staffed department would allow the State and local jurisdictions to quickly identify potentially large disasters and pivot as needed to respond and recover from events like flooding, landslides, public health emergencies, or devastating wildfires, to name a few. We believe OEM currently has dedicated staff who are doing their best to make the system function. However, time and time again we have learned through specific incidents and independent after-action reviews that Emergency Management would be better managed if funded properly and able to directly inform the Governor of day-to-day issues. This would enable OEM to focus on relationship building, training across state government, and investment in tools and resources prior to a critical event.

We believe a standalone Emergency Management Department would allow for better coordination across state and local government and establishment of mechanisms and technology tools that would support bi-directional communication from incident leadership to operational staff.


Further, we feel strongly that an advisory council allowing our industry direct communication to the Director of Emergency Management and the Governor would help ensure a stronger 9-1-1 network and program within the state. This would include ensuring 9-1-1 tax money is used appropriately, a focus on cybersecurity allowing the state to implement Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1) technology, and a focus on interoperability and statewide coordination.

Oregon APCO/NENA supports an Emergency Management Department that encompasses all functions of emergency response. A simple example for this new agency would be a focus on writing grants to strengthen our

cyber connections and a buildout of NG 9-1-1 in Oregon. NG 9-1-1 allows the ECC the ability to push crash data from vehicles directly to hospitals providing better data on the patients being transported to their facilities. This network could also help Oregon Health Authority quickly see a potential outbreak of a disease in one area of the state or a potential surge of patients based on inbound medics seen in the 9-1-1 networks. The system could also be used to notify ECC's statewide of an earthquake or tsunami hitting one area of the state which would allow communities to prepare for potential mutual aid response or know that an influx of traffic may be heading in a certain direction.

Over the past several years, many 9-1-1 centers have seen a reduction in funding for call taking stations that are funded by the 9-1-1 tax. This decision, which was made by OEM 9-1-1 program staff also included reductions to funding for GIS work and a shift from support on contracts needed for the purchase of the call taking equipment. Our association has seen funds diverted at the state level from the 9-1-1 tax and used in other programs not related to 9-1-1 work. We have a vested interest in seeing a program that is placed appropriately within State Government. It is our desire to see an improved structure for Emergency Management which would place Oregon in a much better position to prepare, respond and recover from any emergency or event impacting our residents and visitors to Oregon. Oregon APCO/NENA is committed to help to ensure the new Department of Emergency Management is successful and understands the needs of 9-1-1 in Oregon.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Spross', written over a horizontal line.

Mark Spross  
Oregon APCO/NENA Legislative Vice Chair