



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Stable funding for emergency services will protect communities

HB 4055A ensures prepaid cell phone transactions contribute to 9-1-1 emergency dispatch

SALEM – Today the Oregon Senate passed legislation that will boost support for the emergency responders and 9-1-1 services that help keep Oregon’s communities safe. House Bill 4055A, which passed on a vote of 30-0, applies a small charge to prepaid cellphones to support emergency communications and dispatch services.

Much of the funding for Oregon’s 9-1-1 centers comes from a 75-cent monthly charge on landlines and standard cell phone lines. Prepaid cell phone users have not been charged anything even though they benefit from access to the same emergency services.

House Bill 4055A is the result of years of work to include prepaid cellphones in the funding stream for Oregon’s emergency responders. Under this policy, phone companies would pay the charge for the first nine months of 2015, with customers paying a 75 cent charge on each purchase of prepaid cellphone credits starting in October 2015. The bill also applies to Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) service.

“Providing a stable funding source for public safety ranks very high on my list of priorities,” said Senator Arnie Roblan (D-Coos Bay). “Let’s make sure our emergency responders can do their job to keep us safe by closing the prepaid cell phone loophole.”

Across Oregon, nearly 60 call centers together receive thousands of 9-1-1 calls every day. These call centers help communities respond to emergencies by dispatching police, fire, and medical services to people in crisis.

“In an emergency, we count on 9-1-1 services to deliver the help we need immediately,” said Senator Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene). “It’s critical that we provide a stable base of funding so first responders can do their job.”

House Bill 4055A will now go to Governor John A. Kitzhaber for his approval.

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