

Senator Jackie Winters

Senator Doug Whitsett

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Months of work produce compromise for 9-1-1 funds

Salem, OR - After more than a year of careful negotiations and thoughtful compromises, a bill on its way to the Governor will provide local 9-1-1 centers with more than \$1 million every two years in new resources. The Senate approved House Bill 4055A on Friday.

"At several points over the past year it looked like this wouldn't happen," said Senator Jackie Winters (R-Salem), co-chair of the Ways and Means Sub Committee on Public Safety and one of the key facilitators of House Bill 4055A. "But legislators worked hard and didn't give up, and today we have a bill that is bi-partisan and broadly supported. I'm proud of the work and the new resources that will support the security of our communities."

There is currently a 75 cent per month tax on every telecommunication service with access to the 9-1-1 emergency system. This tax is collected by the service provider from the subscriber.

Until now, there has been no means of collecting this fee on disposable cell phones that come pre-loaded with minutes and no contract. House Bill 4055A establishes a point of sale 75 cent transaction tax on prepaid cell phones after October 1, 2015.

"Many local 9-1-1 centers have struggled to meet the demand for their services, with limited funding," said Senator Doug Whitsett (R-Klamath Falls), who also helped construct House Bill 4055A. "Pre-paid telephones account for an increasing number of 911 calls, and this bill helps ensure that their users are contributing to the maintenance of the system."

The adoption of House Bill 4055A will also free up local city and county resources to pay for other services.

House Bill 4055A was adopted 56 to 1 in the House of Representatives and 30 to 0 in the Senate. It now goes the Governor for approval.

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