



SKAGIT 911

Serving the Citizens of Skagit County

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Increase & Preserve the 9-1-1 Funds

Background: Legislation was passed to provide financial support to build and maintain an Enhanced 9-1-1 system for all residents of Washington State. In 2002, when it appeared there were surplus dollars in this fund, legislation was changed and \$6,000,000 was taken from the 9-1-1 fund to balance the state budget. In 2003, tax revenue for wireless calls was increased to \$.50 to help support the necessary changes in the 9-1-1 network. In 2004, in conflict with RCW 38.52.540, more than \$600,000 was appropriated out of the 9-1-1 fund to fund the Washington State Patrol Computer Aided Dispatch system.

Financial Implications: There continues to be outside demands on our local and state revenues that support E9-1-1 services. These demands are taking away from the ability of the State 9-1-1 office and the local 9-1-1 Centers to build and maintain this necessary network and the service it provides to our communities. Some of these critical demands are:

- Requests for increased tariff charges from Local Exchange Carriers (LEC).
- Requests for parity in recovering costs from Competitive LEC's.
- Requests for cost recovery from Wireless Carriers.
- Costs to accept wireless calls were severely under estimated.
- Requests for financial support from smaller counties to maintain their E9-1-1 systems.
- Needs to financially support new technology, i.e. Voice over Internet Protocols (VoIP), etc.

Discussion: These demands are continually increasing and the funds continually diminishing. The need for funds to maintain our current system, as well as those needed to support new technologies, are essential. If we do not address this now, we will not be able to support, develop and maintain the system that we have all worked so hard to put in place.

Alternatives:

- Deny the requests for financial assistance from vendors who have other revenue sources, including those governed by tariffs.
- Increase the tax revenue to support E9-1-1 services and equipment.
- Ensure new technologies come with an adequate funding source.
- Encourage regionalization in rural areas where it is cost efficient to do so.

Action Requested: *The Washington State Legislature needs to commit to preserving the 9-1-1 funds. It also needs to support legislation that will assist us in not only building a strong network that will support the emergency service needs of our communities, but require that new technologies provide at least the same level of service that is provided today.*