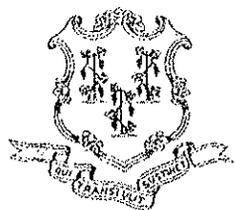


STATE OF CONNECTICUT



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

James M. Thomas
Commissioner

Lieutenant Edwin S. Henion
Chief of Staff

February 15, 2011

Rep. Stephen Dargan, Co-Chairman
Sen. Joan Hartley, Co-Chairman
Public Safety and Security Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

HB 6327 AN ACT INCREASING THE STATUTORY SURCHARGE CAP FOR THE ENHANCED EMERGENCY 9-1-1 PROGRAM

The Department of Public Safety supports this bill.

The Department of Public Safety, Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications (OSET) is seeking an increase to the current surcharge cap of 50 cents. The amount of the surcharge is set on an annual basis by the Department of Public Utility Control and is currently at the statutory cap of 50 cents. If the statutory cap is not increased, OSET will not be able to meet its statutory obligations in the next budget cycle.

In 1996 the Enhanced 9-1-1 Task Force made recommendations in a report to the Public Safety and Public Health Committees which included funding models for 9-1-1. The legislature set the surcharge cap at .50 cents. This model has served the state well and we have accomplished much in that time. However, decreases to revenue and increases to operational costs require that the cap be raised. Compared to other states, Connecticut is in the lower range with the current cap of 50 cents; and even with the increase to 75 cents, it is still significantly less than many other states' current surcharge cap. (Information as to fees charged in other states is attached to this testimony)

This same task force also made recommendations to reduce the number of standalone public safety answering points (PSAPs) by providing funding for municipalities that join together to form regional communication centers. The surcharge provides this funding, financial incentives, as well as transition grants for the purpose of reimbursing municipalities' expenses related to relocating existing telecommunications systems to a regional emergency telecommunication center. Numerous public officials are recognizing the financial and operational benefits that can be realized by merging their communications operations and are initiating efforts to combine resources. If any of these initiatives become a reality the impact on our fund will be considerable. While OSET strongly encourages regionalization and applauds these efforts, it is absolutely critical that we have the funding to support them.

Technology and standards for emergency telecommunications are changing, both locally and nationally. Connecticut has maintained a robust system which has put us in the forefront of E9-1-1 for many years. Technological advances, including the shift from an Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) network to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911) over the Public Safety Data Network (PSDN), come at great expense. However, failure to keep up with these industry changes would be even more costly. We cannot afford to maintain the current system that is obsolete, nor can we afford a decline in 9-1-1 service reliability at a time when public expectation is great. In addition to operating costs for OSET the following is a list of some of the programs related to 9-1-1 that the surcharge pays for:

- Equipment including funding of NG 9-1-1 and the PSDN
- Regional emergency communications centers (7)
- Funding for cities with population greater than 40,000 (22)
- Multi-town PSAPs (9)
- Transition Grants
- CMED subsidy
- EMS data for the Dept. of Public Health
- Capital Expense Grants
- Training and Public Education

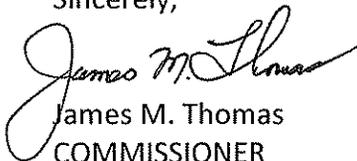
Economic challenges and changes in telephone use including the shift to wireless telephones have caused many consumers to abandon their landline phones and limit the number of wireless phones to save money. The direct result of this shift is a significant decrease in 9-1-1 surcharge revenue. These trends continue and are a cause of great concern in the 9-1-1 community with regard to future funding for E9-1-1.

Options for funding reductions or elimination are extremely limited due to regulatory and statutory mandates. Only transition grants and capital fund expenditures are limited to the availability of funds. Cuts to these programs will place a financial burden on entities that rely on this funding and have planned projects and purchases on the basis that they will be entitled to funding from OSET.

Any other reductions or eliminations would affect initiatives and projects that are currently underway to enhance emergency telecommunications and public safety. Notable projects include the statewide emergency notification system (CT Alert); the Next Generation 9-1-1 system (NG911); and the statewide Public Safety Data Network (PSDN). These projects are in progress, have been heavily promoted both with PSAPs and residents of Connecticut, and all are necessary for public safety. Failure to complete these initiatives would result in problems for the public safety community who are planning for and fully expect to have this technology in place and result in problems in the delivery of 9-1-1 calls to the PSAPs.

The combination of declines in revenue increases in operational costs and new initiatives require the need to raise the current surcharge cap from .50 cents to .75 cents.

Sincerely,



James M. Thomas
COMMISSIONER



Range of 9-1-1 User Fees
 Exact amounts may be adjusted locally
 (August, 2010)

State	Wireline	Wireless	VoIP
Alabama	5% of Base Rate \$2.00 (Max) – Districts under 25,000	\$0.70	5% of Base Rate \$2.00 (Max) – Districts under 25,000
Alaska	\$0.50 - \$2.00	\$0.50 - \$2.00	
Arizona	\$0.20	\$0.20	\$0.20
Arkansas	5% - 12% of Tariff Rates	\$0.65	\$0.65
California	.50% of intrastate calls	.50% of intrastate calls	.50% of intrastate calls
Colorado	\$0.43 - \$1.50 (max)	\$0.43 - \$1.50 (max)	\$0.43 - \$1.50 (max)
Connecticut	\$0.47	\$0.47	\$0.47
Delaware	\$0.60	\$0.60	\$0.60
District of Columbia	\$0.76 Wireline \$0.62 Centrex \$4.96 PBX Trunk	\$0.76	\$0.76
Florida	\$0.41 - \$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50
Georgia	\$1.50	\$1.00 - \$1.50	\$1.50
Hawaii	\$0.27	\$0.66	
Idaho	\$1.00 (max)	\$1.00 (max)	\$1.00 (max)
Illinois	\$0.25 - \$5.00	\$0.73 \$2.50 City of Chicago \$0.73 Prepaid	
Indiana	3% or 10% of Monthly Access	\$0.50 \$0.25 Prepaid	3% or 10% of Monthly Access
Iowa	\$0.45 - \$1.50	\$0.65	
Kansas	\$0.75 (max)	\$0.50	\$0.50
Kentucky	\$0.36 - \$4.50	\$0.70	
Louisiana	\$0.62 - \$1.00 Residential \$1.30 - \$2.00 Business	\$0.85 2% of Retail Sales - Prepaid	
Maine	\$0.45	\$0.45 \$0.45 Prepaid	\$0.45
Maryland	\$0.75 County Fee \$0.25 State Fee	\$0.75 County Fee \$0.25 State Fee	\$0.75 County Fee \$0.25 State Fee
Massachusetts	\$0.75	\$0.75 \$0.75 Prepaid	\$0.75
Michigan	\$0.19 State Fee \$0.21 - \$3.64 by County	\$0.19 State Fee \$0.21 - \$3.64 by County \$0.90 Prepaid	\$0.19 State Fee \$0.21 - \$3.64 by County
Minnesota	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75
Mississippi	\$1.00 Res \$2.00 Commercial (25 Lines)	\$1.00	

Missouri	15% of Base Rate (33 Counties) .5% of Sales Tax (23 Counties) Varies Funding Methods – Remaining Counties	None	
Montana	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00
Nebraska	\$0.50 - \$1.00	\$0.50 - \$0.70	
Nevada	Varies by Jurisdiction – Property tax and/or Surcharge (max \$0.25)	Must be equal to wireline Surcharge	
New Hampshire	\$0.57	\$0.57	
New Jersey	\$0.90	\$0.90	\$0.90
New Mexico	\$0.51	\$0.51	
New York	\$0.35	\$1.20 - \$1.50	
North Carolina	\$0.60	\$0.60	\$0.60
North Dakota	\$1.00 - \$1.50 (max)	\$1.00 - \$1.50 (max)	\$1.00 – 1.50 (max)
Ohio	\$0.50 (Max) (Legally limited to a few Counties, no general surcharge.)	\$0.28	
Oklahoma	3-15% of Base Rate	\$0.50 (Approx. 42 Counties)	\$0.50
Oregon	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75
Pennsylvania	\$1.00 - \$1.50	\$1.00	\$1.00
Rhode Island	\$1.00	\$1.26	\$1.26
South Carolina	Based on access lines	\$0.61	
South Dakota	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75
Tennessee	\$0.65 - \$1.50 Res./ \$2.00 - \$3 Bus	\$1.00	\$1.00
Texas	\$0.50 State Program Fees Vary – District	\$0.50	\$0.50
Utah	\$0.61 Local Fee plus \$0.08 State Fee	\$0.61 Local Fee plus \$0.08 State Fee	\$0.61 Local Fee plus \$0.08 State Fee
Vermont	Universal Service Funding	Universal Service Funding	
Virginia	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75
Washington	\$0.20 Statewide \$0.50 by Counties	\$0.20 Statewide \$0.50 by Counties	
West Virginia	\$0.98 - \$5.34 by County	\$3.00 6% of Sales - Prepaid	\$0.98 - \$5.34 by County
Wisconsin	\$0.36 - \$1.00	None	
Wyoming	\$0.75	\$0.75	