HOUSE BILL REPORT
HB 2351

As of Second Reading

Title: An act relating to funding enhanced 911 emergency communication systems.

Brief Description: Funding enhanced 911 emergency communication systems.

Sponsors: Representatives Ericks, Morris, McCoy, Seaquist, Green, Hunt, Van De Wege, Appleton, White, Williams, Kenney and Nelson.

Brief History:
Committee Activity:
   None.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases the state and county enhanced 911 excise tax.

- Expands the enhanced 911 excise tax to include interconnected voice-over-internet protocol service lines.

Staff: Joseph Archuleta (786-7192)

Background:

Emergency 911 communications services allow callers to reach agencies that can dispatch an appropriate type of response. Enhanced 911 (E-911) is a type of service that allows the caller's phone number and location to be automatically displayed at the public safety answering point. In Washington 911 systems are primarily administered by counties and in some cases, cities.

Enhanced 911 services are funded by county and state excise taxes. All counties may impose an excise tax on each switched telephone access line. The maximum rate that a county may levy on a switched access line is 50 cents. Counties may also impose an excise tax of up to 50 cents per month on each radio (wireless) access line. In contrast to the counties, the state only levies a 20-cent tax on switched telephone access lines and radio access lines. State

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E-911 excise taxes fund a state E-911 coordinator and help counties to pay for the extra costs incurred in upgrading from a basic system to an E-911 system.

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Summary of Bill:

County E-911 Excise Tax.
On January 1, 2010, counties may impose an E-911 excise tax for each switched access lines, radio access lines, and interconnected voice over internet protocol (VOIP) service line, in the amount not exceeding 70 cents per month.

Counties imposing a county E-911 excise tax must provide an annual update to the enhanced 911 coordinator detailing the proportion of their county E-911 excise tax that is being spent on:

- efforts to modernize their existing 911 system; and
- basic and E-911 operational costs.

State E-911 Excise Tax.
On January 1, 2010 the state may impose an E-911 excise tax for each switched access lines, radio access lines, and interconnected VOIP service line, in the amount not exceeding 25 cents per month.

Administration.
The state and county E-911 excise tax must be paid by the subscriber to the local exchange company providing the switched access line, the radio communications service company providing the radio access line, or the provider of VOIP service line.

Counties imposing an E-911 excise tax must contract with the Department of Revenue (Department) for the administration and collection of the tax prior to the effective date of a resolution or ordinance imposing the tax. The Department may deduct a percentage amount, as provided by contract, of no more than 2 percent of the E-911 excise taxes collected to cover administration and collection expenses incurred by the Department. The remainder of the portion of the county E-911 excise tax must be remitted to the Department and deposited into an account in the State Treasury.

The Secretary of State shall submit this act to the people for their adoption and ratification, or rejection, at a special election on August 18, 2009.

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Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: This bill takes effect October 1, 2009 except for sections 1 through 3, relating to the county enhanced 911 excise tax; 5 through 8, relating to the state enhanced

911 excise tax; and 11 through 20, and 22, relating to the filing of taxes, resale, and emergency service communication districts, which take effect January 1, 2010.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) None.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.