

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6846

As Passed House:
April 2, 2010

Title: An act relating to enhanced 911 emergency communications services.

Brief Description: Concerning enhanced 911 emergency communications services.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Brandland, Regala and Fraser).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

None.

First Special Session

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/2/10, 56-34.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Increases the maximum tax rate by 5 cents and 20 cents, respectively, for state and county enhanced 911 excise taxes.
- Expands the enhanced 911 excise tax to include interconnected voice-over-internet protocol service lines.
- Provides centralized collection by the state Department of Revenue for county enhanced 911 excise taxes.

Staff: Jeff Mitchell (786-7139)

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.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

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 levies a 20-cent tax on switched telephone access lines and radio access lines. State 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.

Summary of Bill:

County E-911 Excise Tax.

On January 1, 2011, counties may increase the county E-911 excise tax for each switched access line and radio access line from 0.50 cents per line to 0.70 cents per line. The 70-cent county E-911 excise tax is also extended to interconnected voice over internet protocol (VOIP) service lines.

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
- enhancing E-911 operational costs.

The E-911 coordinator must specify rules, with the assistance of the enhanced 911 advisory committee, defining the purposes for which available state E-911 funding may be expended. In addition, the E-911 coordinator must provide an annual updated to the E-911 advisory committee on how much money each county has spent on efforts to modernize their existing 911 system and basic and E-911 operating costs.

State E-911 Excise Tax.

On January 1, 2011, the state E-911 excise tax for each switched access lines and radio access lines is increased from 0.20 cents to 0.25 cents. The 25-cent state E-911 excise tax is also extended to VOIP service lines.

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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect October 1, 2010, except sections 1-3, 5-7, 10-21, and 23, which take effect January 1, 2011.