

Bell County, Texas

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COUNTY JUDGE JON H. BURROWS

April 25, 2011

The Honorable John Carona
Chairman, Senate Committee on Business & Commerce
320 Sam Houston State Office Building
Austin, TX 78711

RE: Support for SB 1848 (Hegar)

Dear Chairman Carona:

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 1848 by Senator Glen Hegar relating to the distribution of the emergency service fee for wireless telecommunications connections and the prepaid 9-1-1 emergency service fee.

SB 1848 would afford jurisdictions within the state 9-1-1 system, like Bell County, to receive dedicated wireless and prepaid wireless revenues generated by their regions in the same manner that the state's 51 emergency communications districts and home rule cities do. Because those revenues currently pass through the state appropriations process and those funds are generally not fully appropriate for the purpose for which they were collected, 9-1-1 programs within the state system experience unpredictability in planning for their 9-1-1 equipment and operations needs.


Bell County, home to Fort Hood, has real live experience and critical need for these services. When our Joint Emergency Communications Center began receiving frantic calls on November 5, 2010 about the shooter at Fort Hood, our resources were stretched to the maximum.

Bell County has grown from 237,000 in 2000 to over 310,000 in 2011. Both IH-35 and U.S. 190 pass through Bell County generating a high volume of emergency calls. Our 9-1-1 Center is a cooperative endeavor of Bell County, Killeen, Temple, Harker Heights and Belton. We have one Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). Our needs for 9-1-1 equipment upgrades, maintenance and replacement, not to mention personnel, is critical.

SB 1848 is needed to provide more predictable revenues to meet these needs, particularly in the current funding environment. If local taxpayers are required to pay for critical 9-1-1 functions because the dedicated revenue collected is not made available to local jurisdictions, they will effectively **be taxed twice** for the same service.

I would like to ask that my letter of support for SB 1848 be made part of the official hearing record, and ask that you give this important legislation favorable consideration.

Sincerely,



JON H. BURROWS
Bell County Judge

cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Business & Commerce