

Before the Montana State Legislature

House Committee on Federal Relations, Energy, and Telecommunications

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Testimony of Nathan Glazier
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Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Nathan Glazier and I am the Manager of Regulatory Affairs for Western Wireless which provides wireless service in Montana under the Cellular One brand name. Thank you for this opportunity to address the Committee on LC 1579 and the deployment and cost recovery of wireless enhanced 911 ("E-911") service. E-911 service is an important public policy goal which this bill will help accomplish in Montana. Western Wireless is pleased to support this bill.

Today there are more than 175 million wireless subscribers in the U.S. and each day these subscribers make more than 200,000 E-911 calls.¹ There are approximately 8,000 Public Safety Answering Points or PSAPs in the U.S., and by late 2004 approximately only 1600 PSAPs were upgraded to be able to receive data to help them locate wireless callers.² As the number of wireless subscribers has increased so too has the number of wireless 911 calls received by PSAPs. This trend will likely continue, and it is important that the entire 911 network, from the end user to the dispatcher, become equipped with the capability to make location information a part of the public safety and emergency response process. The technology to deliver accurate Phase II location

¹ CTIA Wireless 9-1-1 and Distress Calls

² See "Wireless E9-1-1: Phase II Progress Report; ComCARE Alliance Warns of Safety Divide," Sept. 2004, at <http://www.comcare.org/research/E9-1-1Report%209-04.pdf>.

information exists today and is being rolled out in a patchwork fashion in the state and across the nation. This process however takes time, coordination, and money. This bill provides the structure and resources necessary to speed the deployment of E-911 service to all parts of Montana.

It is not enough to simply require wireless carriers to deploy Phase II technology on their network, nor is it just a matter of upgrading a majority of the PSAPs in the state. To successfully deploy a statewide 911 system there must be coordination and direction; wireless technology must be deployed; network arrangements with the Local Exchange Carriers must be made; important upgrades at each of the state's PSAPs must be completed; and the system must be tested from end to end to ensure all of the vital data elements for location information are successfully obtained, transported and received by the PSAP. This bill provides the critical funding mechanism to make this happen.

Including wireless carriers in the state program is an important element of this bill and helps create a cooperative approach to a complex, highly technical and sometimes political process. Western Wireless recognizes that it is important for wireless subscribers to participate in contributing to the 911 fund via the 911 surcharge, but it is also important that funds from the surcharge be used to cover the significant deployment costs of the wireless part of the state 911 system. Prohibiting wireless carrier cost recovery would only serve to unfairly single out one portion of the 911 system and the wireless customers contributing to the fund. Furthermore, doing so would divert wireless capital infrastructure dollars away from other network build-out plans in the state. Including wireless creates an equitable balance and allows wireless carriers and their

customers to have an important and necessary voice in the roll-out of service. With equal contribution to the fund should come equal support from the fund.

Just last week one of our customers dialed 911 to report a mountain biking accident. The victim had crashed in a remote area on a biking trail. His helmet was broken, he was unconscious, missing teeth and bleeding from his mouth, apparently from a broken jaw. This "Good Samaritan" dialed 911 from her wireless phone which was equipped with a GPS chip, and the call went to a PSAP that was equipped to receive and use the location information sent by the caller's handset. The PSAP was able to dispatch a 4-wheel drive ambulance right to the location of the accident.

This E-911 success story would not have been possible without the deployment of wireless E-911 Phase II service. This bill is a vital step in the right direction in helping to speed forward the statewide deployment of this valuable lifesaving service. Western Wireless is pleased to support this bill and urges the Members of the Committee to vote in favor of it.

Thank you for your time, and I will of course be glad to answer any questions you may have.