

**Testimony of Bonnie Lorang
in support of HB 27**

Montana Independent Telecommunications Systems (MITS)

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Bonnie Lorang. I am the Director of Regulatory Affairs for MITS, Montana Independent Telecommunications Systems. MITS represents telephone cooperatives and their wireline and cellular subsidiaries operating across Montana.

MITS has always been strong supporter of public safety and Montana's 911 Program. We have served on the State 911 Advisory Council. For nearly two years, we worked through a consensus process within the 911 Council for proposed wireless E911 legislation. At the end of 2006, the Council voted to move forward with a consensus bill addressing some of the challenges Montana faces in deploying statewide wireless E911. HB27 is that consensus bill. We strongly support it.

Where is Montana in terms of access to 911? According to the Montana Public Safety 911 Office, all PSAPs or public safety answering points in Montana have access to Basic 911. Virtually all PSAPs have an approved plan for implementing landline E911, providing location and telephone number information. About 35 of the 57 PSAPs have actually deployed wireline E911. Both PSAPs and wireline carriers have and are recovering some portions of their costs for E911. This includes initial costs and ongoing costs. We support that. It has been good for Montana.

We are nowhere near that point, however for rolling out E911 on wireless calls. If a 911 call is made from a cellular phone in a few counties – such as Cascade, Chouteau, Flathead, Gallatin, Missoula and Yellowstone, the caller is very fortunate. The wireless carrier is able to transmit and the PSAP is able to receive location and number information. The PSAP can identify who is calling and where he is.

If you are not in those counties, the story is different. The PSAPs and the wireless carriers do not have the ability to transmit and receive the GPS location data that will identify the caller's specific location. Why not? It is very expensive. It is expensive to initially acquire and install necessary equipment and facilities. It is also expensive to transmit and receive the data in a format that can provide technical GPS location that travels from a wireless network to a local emergency dispatcher.

You may hear some questions from wireline companies questioning this bill. *Both* wireline and wireless subscribers have contributed to the 911 program for many years. Wireless carriers have supported the deployment of wireline E911. Wireline carriers recovered portions of the initial costs for 911 and they continue to recover costs from PSAPs on a monthly basis through billing arrangements.

The additional 50-cent fee proposed in HB27 will move wireless subscribers closer to having access to public safety responders. It will allow PSAPs to recover a portion of their costs to deploy E911 and it will allow wireless carriers to recover a portion of their costs. The cost recovery for the wireless carriers is comparable to the cost recovery provided for wireline carriers. It is a level playing field. It is sound public policy.

We believe that Montana's best chance of getting broader deployment of wireless E911 service lies with HB27. HB 27 allows both PSAPs and wireless carriers, partners in E911 deployment, to defray at least a portion of the E911 costs.

We urge a due pass of HB27 as drafted.

Bonnie Lorang
Montana Independent Telecommunications Systems
2021 Eleventh Ave, Helena MT

blorang@mitstel.com
406-594-9662

Montana E9-1-1 Status Report

	BASIC	ENHANCED		WIRELESS	
PSAP/County	9-1-1	Approved E9-1-1 Plan	Deployed E9-1-1	Wireless E9-1-1	Statewide E9-1-1 & Wireless Contract
Anaconda/Deer Lodge	Yes	Yes			No
Beaverhead	Yes	Yes			No
Big Horn	Yes	Yes			Yes
Blackfeet	Yes	Yes			Pending
Blaine	Yes	Yes	Yes	In progress	Yes
Broadwater	Yes	Yes	Yes		No
Butte/Silver Bow	Yes	Yes	Yes		No
Carbon	Yes	Yes			Yes
Cascade	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Central MT	Yes	Yes	Yes	In progress	Yes
Chouteau	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Custer/Garfield	Yes	Yes			Yes
Daniels	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Dawson	Yes	Yes			Yes
Fallon/N. Carter/Wibaux/Prairie	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Fergus	Yes	Yes			Pending
Flathead	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Gallatin	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Gardiner/Cooke City	Yes	Pending			No
Glacier	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Granite	Yes	Yes			Yes
Hill	Yes	Yes	Yes	In progress	Yes
Jefferson	Yes	Yes	Yes		No
Lake	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Laurel	Yes	Yes			No
Lewis & Clark	Yes	Yes	Yes		No
Liberty	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Lincoln(Libby/Eureka/Troy	Yes	Yes			Yes
Madison	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
McCone	Yes	Yes			No
Meagher	Yes	Yes	Yes		No
Mineral	Yes	Yes			Yes
Missoula	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Musselshell	Yes	Yes	Yes		No
Northern Cheyenne	Yes	Pending			Pending
Park	Yes	Yes	Yes		No
Phillips	Yes	Yes			Yes
Pondera	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Powder River/S. Carter	Yes	Yes			Yes
Powell	Yes	Yes	Yes		No
Ravalli	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Richland	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Rocky Boy	Yes	Yes			Pending
Roosevelt	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Rosebud/Treasure	Yes	Yes			No
Sanders	Yes	Yes			Yes
Sheridan	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Stillwater	Yes	Yes	Yes		No
Sweetgrass	Yes	Yes			Yes
Teton	Yes	Yes	Yes		No
Toole	Yes	Yes			Yes
Valley	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
West Yellowstone	Yes	Yes	Yes		No
Wheatland/Golden Valley	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Yellowstone	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No