



Southeastern Massachusetts

Regional 911 District

October 5th, 2023

Shonda Green
Secretary
Department of Telecommunications and Cable
1000 Washington Street, Suite 600
Boston, MA 02118-6500

RE: Docket # D.T.C 23-3 / Letter in Support of the Petition

Secretary Green,

I write to express my unequivocal support for the State 911 Department's recent petition to the Department of Telecommunications and Cable, urging the retention of the \$1.50 monthly Enhanced 911 surcharge. A proposed reduction to \$1.00 come January 2024 could lead to significant setbacks in our emergency response mechanisms, threatening the safety and welfare of the entire Commonwealth.

The progress achieved in our 911 infrastructure in recent years has been nothing short of transformative, facilitating the preservation of numerous lives. A key contributor to these advancements has been the financial backing from the existing surcharge. As the Director of a PSAP — an entity at the forefront of these life-saving endeavors — I can't overemphasize the vital importance of this funding.

Since 2018, the operational dynamics of PSAPs have seen exponential growth in demand. This can be attributed to a myriad of factors. The quantum leaps in cellular technology now facilitate rapid data transmission at remarkable speeds. The miniaturization and affordability of sensors, societal expectations of public safety data management, and the shift toward specialized emergency responses have redefined the responsibilities of PSAPs. Noteworthy is the rise of autonomous emergency mechanisms, such as fall-detection in wireless devices, vehicular emergency sensors, and integrations with services like Uber and Lyft. The inclusion of text messaging and rich data streams like live video have bolstered the capabilities of PSAPs to unprecedented levels. A mere 50-cent increase in 2018 is now dwarfed by these massive strides, making a reduction seem not only counterintuitive but potentially hazardous.

It's essential to highlight that surcharge revenues, diligently used, are the lifeblood of the 911 system, ensuring its seamless operation and directly buttressing PSAP functions. This prudent financial management has facilitated the realization of one of the few Next Generation 9-1-1 systems nationwide. It sustains pivotal projects throughout the Commonwealth — from fostering inter-municipal cooperation to daily staffing incentives, standardized training, and vital pre-arrival medical instruction protocols. The implications of these are profound, impacting every Massachusetts resident. A reduction in the surcharge would unquestionably undermine these invaluable programs.

Moreover, the surcharge has empowered various PSAPs to collaboratively invest in state-of-the-art Computer-Aided Dispatch and Records Management Software (CAD/RMS). This tool addresses many



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challenges plaguing PSAPs, from enhancing cybersecurity to effectively handling the avalanche of data from cellular innovations. Improved data processing capabilities lead to better emergency response — be it basic emergencies or critical ones. This has enabled dynamic resource sharing, alternate dispatch strategies, and standardized data reporting, among other benefits. Without the surcharge's full backing, such ambitious endeavors would remain a distant dream.

I implore the Department of Telecommunications and Cable to view the surcharge not merely as a monetary figure but as a vital lifeline that safeguards our Commonwealth. The cost of operating the 9-1-1 system has increased significantly since 2018, and a reduction of surcharge will result in a reduction of capacity services and a significant draw on already strapped local tax bases. Maintaining the surcharge at \$1.50 offers no increase to current subscriber bills and allows the 9-1-1 system to maintain the ability to protect the residents and visitors of Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert A. Verdone", written over a horizontal line.

Robert A. Verdone
Executive Director
Southeastern Massachusetts
Regional 911 District

