



CITY OF
PORTLAND, OREGON

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

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Potential 2014 State Legislative Agenda Items

Close the 9-1-1 Tax Loophole for Prepaid Cell Phones

The 9-1-1 Telephone Tax requires each circuit capable of accessing 9-1-1 to pay a 75 cent per month tax. Funds collected from this tax account for approximately 30 percent of 9-1-1 centers' operating budgets statewide, and about 20 percent of the Bureau of Emergency Communications' (BOEC) Budget. Presently, service providers for pre-paid cellular telephones have not been collecting and remitting the tax. Closing this tax loophole will recover an estimated \$6 million a year that the State is losing and about \$1 million a year that BOEC is losing from providers of pre-paid phones, which originate approximately 15 percent of the emergency calls BOEC receives.

Expand Financing Options for Energy Efficiency Building Retrofits

Current statute allows a local government to issue public revenue bonds to fund loans for energy efficiency improvements to residential and commercial properties that are repaid as part of the property tax bill. Amendments to state law would allow for an "open market model" of both public and private capital to fund such loans, encouraging lower interest rates and more robust investment in energy efficient improvements to real property.

Restore Funding for Emergency Housing and Homeless Assistance (EHA/SHAP)

The Emergency Housing Account (EHA) and the State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP) help to stabilize individuals and families and prevent them from becoming homeless. EHA is a flexible tool used to prevent and/or end homelessness through short-term assistance. SHAP is used to provide emergency shelter, especially to those escaping violence. Due to the economic downturn, General Fund dollars for EHA and SHAP have been steadily declining since 2007. Returning funding to 2007 biennium levels, plus inflation, will require adding back a total of \$3 million to EHA and \$1 million to SHAP for a total of \$7.5 million (EHA) and \$3.6 million (SHAP). Restoring funding to these critical programs could help as many as 1,200 families needing emergency housing assistance or shelter.

Promote Gun Safety Through Background Checks

Public safety is a fundamental priority for the City of Portland and gun violence poses a serious threat to the security of our community. In 2010, there were 458 deaths due to firearms in Oregon. Mass casualty shootings and other incidents of tragic gun violence have dominated the news in recent history. Robust background checks for the purchase

or transfer of firearms are one effective preventative measure against gun violence. According to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, background checks have prevented 1.8 million people, including felons and the mentally ill, from buying guns in the United States.

Protect and Advocate for Local Government Authority

Local governments are often in the best position to respond to the needs of the community. The City of Portland opposes efforts to preempt its authority to develop and enforce local ordinances, manage its bureaus and functions, raise local revenues, or avoid state imposed tax expenditures on local government. For example, the City opposes efforts to preempt or alter:

- Franchise fee authority;
- The City's paid sick leave ordinance;
- The City's ability to impose business license taxes; and
- Utility license fee authority.

Conversely, the City supports efforts to remove preemptions on local government authority, such as allowing greater autonomy in day-to-day operations or increased authority to levy taxes or fees. For example, the City supports lifting preemptions on local authority to:

- Manage sidewalk use and safety;
- Levy taxes on alcohol and tobacco products; and
- Establish a city vehicle registration fee.

Protect and Enhance State Shared Revenues

Preserving and enhancing the City of Portland's share of state liquor, tobacco, and 9-1-1 emergency communications revenues is critical to its ability to fund essential public services. The City General Fund receives more than \$14 million in revenue from liquor and tobacco taxes through the state shared revenue funding formula. State shared revenue from the 9-1-1 excise tax accounts for approximately \$3.78 million annually to the City's Bureau of Emergency Communications' 9-1-1 call answering and dispatch services in Multnomah County. In addition to protecting these vital funding sources, the City of Portland will advocate for future revenue sharing formulas to support funding for essential City services.