

HB 89 by Rep. Millican

9-1-1 Funding

The legislation sets in motion a 15-month process that will conclude with the implementation of a single, consistent, statewide access fee for 9-1-1 service in Alabama. This fee will be collected from all services – traditional land line service, traditional post-paid wireless service, the so-called "pre-paid" wireless service, voice-over-internet, and all other access mediums.

This process is achieved by establishing a 13-member statewide board that will first determine a baseline funding level for each 9-1-1 district in the state. Then the board will establish a proposed statewide rate to produce revenue sufficient to provide each district its baseline funding level. Because the rate will be set by estimates, the bill provides for the possibility of annual adjustments to ensure the proper funding level is achieved.

This proposed rate will be reviewed by a Permanent Oversight Commission – composed primarily of legislators appointed by the speaker and Senate pro tem – that can change the rate based on facts uncovered by the commission. The statewide board would then accept that change or, by supermajority vote, utilize its proposed rate.

Until the new statewide rate is enacted, all local 9-1-1 districts will continue to collect their land line fees and receive a portion of the existing statewide wireless fee as they do today. All local 9-1-1 boards will continue to function as they do today, but will be audited bi-annually by the Department of Examiners of Public Accounts and subject to recommendations from the oversight commission.

The oversight commission will also review the operation of 9-1-1 in Alabama, including

- Publishing a report on the operational and financial condition of the current 9-1-1 systems in Alabama;
- Recommending adjustments to the 9-1-1 rate;
- Developing recommendations for the most efficient and effective delivery of 9-1-1 services in the state;
- Studying the charges levied by each telecommunications provider to each communications district;
- Developing legislation necessary to implement its long-term 9-1-1 plan and submitting those recommendations to the Legislature by the last day of the 2014 regular session.

The statewide board that sets and adjusts the new statewide rate is composed of 13 members appointed by the governor:

- Seven members recommended by AAND, one from each Congressional district, with each district representative selected by vote of AAND members from that Congressional district. Initial appointments shall include the three district representatives on the CMRS Board and a member from the odd-numbered Congressional districts.
- Two members recommended by CMRS providers;
- Two members recommended by ILECs, who shall not be from the same ILEC;
- Two members recommended by cable companies that provide phone service, who shall not be from the same cable company;
- After the initial appointments, board members will serve staggered four-year terms.

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The board is also charged with:

- Planning for implementation of the statewide 9-1-1 rate and then distributing revenue according to the formula;
- Developing a 9-1-1 State Plan;
- Publishing a report on the operational and financial condition of the current 9-1-1 systems;
- Adjusting the statewide rate over time;
- Recommending a long-term plan for 9-1-1 service, including any needed legislation, no later than Feb. 1, 2014;
- Administering the 9-1-1 Fund and monthly statewide 9-1-1 rate;
- Establishing policies and procedures to fund advisory services and training for districts.

Questions? Contact the Association of County Commissions

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