

HB 1199 -- 911 Emergency Services

Sponsor: Engler

This bill allows any county or St. Louis City to levy a tax for enhanced 911 services, if approved by the voters. The governing body must choose between two methods of tax assessment: (1) an extension of the wire line tax for 911 services to wireless services at the same rate; or (2) a flat tax of 50 cents per line per month.

Twenty percent of the taxes collected on wireless service will be deposited into the 911 Emergency Services Fund which is created. This percentage will be decreased to 10% when at least 60% of the counties with 75% of the population have passed a tax on wireless services. The percentage will be eliminated two years after 100% of the counties have passed a tax on wireless services. Moneys in the fund will be used for matching grants for the purpose of implementing a comprehensive statewide 911 system. These grants will be administered by the Office of Administration in consultation with the Department of Public Safety.

Grants will only be given to counties and St. Louis City if they pass the tax; however, the county or city must match at least 25% of the grant with local funds. The county or city cannot receive grants for more than three years in a row. Grants cannot be in excess of 5% of the total funds available. Grants may be made on a collective basis to counties entering inter-county agreements to provide services.

The bill clarifies that taxes generated by either the wired line or wireless line tax may only be used for emergency telephone services. The bill also authorizes the State Auditor to perform audits to ensure moneys are being used in this manner.

The bill expands the scope of the Advisory Committee for 911 Service Oversight to include oversight of implementation of enhanced 911 services. The advisory committee is also instructed to advise the Department of Public Safety and the Office of Administration regarding the matching grants from the 911 Emergency Services Fund.

Most provisions of the current statewide enhanced 911 tax are repealed by the bill.