



911 Funding and System Reform
A Resolution in Support of 911 Funding and System Reform

RESOLUTION No. 6 of 2015

A resolution of the county of **Clarion**, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, urging the Pennsylvania General Assembly to amend Chapter 53 of Title 35 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, relating to Emergency Telephone Services (formerly the Public Safety Emergency Telephone Act, Act 78 of 1990).

WHEREAS, the Public Safety Emergency Telephone Act gave Pennsylvania county government responsibility for implementing and managing a system of 911 call taking on behalf of the citizens of the Commonwealth, setting in place planning processes, lines of authority between counties and Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and a funding stream based on telephone subscriber surcharges; and

WHEREAS, Under counties' stewardship, Pennsylvania's 911 system is one of the best managed and up-to-date systems in the nation, with almost complete E-911 coverage (Enhanced 911, providing locator systems for wireline, wireless, and VoIP calls), the fewest Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) per capita among large states, and a commitment to moving toward Next Generation 911 (NG911) technologies.

WHEREAS, the 911 system faces significant challenges to meet rapidly changing technology requirements, a funding stream whose failure to keep pace with needs requires counties to rely both heavily and increasingly on the property tax, and the June 30, 2015, sunset of one key funding source, the wireless telephone surcharge; and

WHEREAS, the Act currently keys its planning, administrative, and audit functions separately to different communications technologies, inhibiting counties' ability to manage the system, to incorporate shared services, or to implement system efficiencies; and

WHEREAS, the intent of the original law was to fully fund counties' eligible 911 costs; and

WHEREAS, the current subscriber fee structure is a monthly surcharge on wireline, wireless, and VoIP subscribers, ranging from \$1.00 to \$1.50 per month for wireline, and set at \$1.00 per month for wireless and VoIP; and

WHEREAS, the wireline fees have not changed since the Act's passage in 1990 and the wireless and VoIP fees, although adopted later, were keyed to the 1990 wireline rates, all of which, if adjusted for inflation alone, would mean fees of at least \$1.72; and

WHEREAS, Counties over the years have adapted and upgraded 911 systems to meet unanticipated technology change including locator systems, and are now actively planning

upcoming technology needs including Next Generation 911 text, video, and other social media; and

WHEREAS, the onslaught of technological change was unforeseen and dramatically altered the ability of the funding structure to meet county needs, for both operating and capital costs; and

WHEREAS, the current funding structure covers only **55%** percent of **Clarion** County's cost to provide this vital service, with the remainder drawn from County property tax revenues; and

WHEREAS, the need to address the funding stream is immediate, and will reach crisis proportions if action is delayed past the June 30, 2015 expiration of the wireless telephone subscriber surcharge; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that **Clarion** County joins with the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania in support of a comprehensive rewrite of Chapter 53 of Title 35; and

RESOLVED, that **Clarion** County supports a reform bill that is technology-neutral allowing counties to develop systems meeting current and future needs; and

RESOLVED, that **Clarion** County supports a reform bill that combines planning, administrative, funding and audit provisions into a single consolidated whole, affording counties the best opportunity to manage effectively, facilitate shared services, incorporate system efficiencies, and readily adapt to new technologies and

RESOLVED, that **Clarion** County supports a reform bill that increases 911 subscriber fees to a level that fully supports current and next generation operations, and which keys the fees to inflation or allows for other mechanisms to provide regular adjustments to meet system needs; and

RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the **Clarion** County legislative delegation, to Governor Wolf, to the Director of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, and to the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania.

ADOPTED by the Board of Commissioners of the County of **Clarion**, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, this 10th day of February, 2015.

Clarion County Board of Commissioners


Wayne R. Brosius, Chairman


G. Butch Campbell


Gregory A. Faller

Attest:



Carol Clinger
Chief Clerk/County Administrator