



REPRESENTATIVE KEVIN MEYER

HOUSE DISTRICT 19

SPONSOR STATEMENT

HB 186

“An Act relating to a municipal enhanced 911 surcharge on wireless telephones.”

In 1993, Anchorage was one of the first communities in Alaska to install an Enhanced 911 (E911) emergency system. Several other communities in Alaska now have installed E911 systems, or are in the process of creating an E911 system. The E911 system provides faster response time, automatic routing to the appropriate emergency response unit, and visual display of the location and telephone number of *wireline* calls to assist in response to emergency calls.

Since the installation of the E911 systems, the use of *wireless* telephones has increased in Alaska, resulting in more calls to the E911 system as well as faster notification to local public safety agencies of emergencies. Currently in Anchorage, over 25% of all calls to the E911 system are from *wireless* telephones.

The quick response to emergencies from *wireless* calls, does however, have some drawbacks. A dispatcher receiving a *wireless* call to the E911 system does not get the visual display of the caller's location or the automatic telephone number identification as with a *wireline* call. As a result, the dispatcher must ask for the caller's identity and location to properly route the information to the appropriate emergency response unit. This increases the response time to an emergency.

With the installation of the E911 systems in Alaska, the Alaska legislature passed legislation allowing municipalities to impose a surcharge for each local exchange access line for *wireline* telephones. Municipalities the size of Anchorage are allowed to assess a \$.50 per month surcharge, with smaller municipalities (less than 100,000 people) allowed to assess a \$.75 per month surcharge. This surcharge assists in paying for acquisition, maintenance and operation of the E911 systems throughout Alaska. Wireless phones are not currently subjected to the surcharge.

HB 186 amends AS 29.35.131 to allow municipalities with E911 systems to impose the same surcharge on *wireless* telephones. The revenue from HB 186 will help fund additional staff and purchase necessary equipment to track the source and location of *wireless* phone calls to the E911 system.
