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DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING
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TESTIMONY
OF
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DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES
TO THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON
PUBLIC SAFETY
ON
February 5, 2009

H.B. 1014

RELATING TO ENHANCED 911 SERVICES

Chair Hanohano, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.B. 1014.

The Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) strongly supports H.B. 1014.

This bill will establish a single entity to administer enhanced 911 services for the State of Hawai'i. This would put Hawai'i on par with most of the country. Right now, Hawai'i is one of only six states that does not have a single entity for the coordination of enhanced 911 services.

The State of Hawai'i established the Wireless Enhanced 911 Board to administer wireless enhanced 911 service in the State of Hawai'i, and the Board has succeeded in implementing the service statewide. Meanwhile, communications technologies have advanced and now, technologies beyond wireless telephone service are capable of being connected to public service answering points (PSAPs).

The current Wireless Enhanced 911 Board does not include representation from other communications service providers. This bill, if passed, will establish a single state entity to administer enhanced 911 services for the State of Hawai'i. New Board members would include representatives from Third Generation (3G) communication service providers, and the director or designee of the Hawaii Public Utilities Commission.

This bill would also reduce the current surcharge from 66 cents to 46 cents. Reduction of surcharge from 66 cents to 46 cents, as this bill proposes, will lower the cost burden on wireless phone customers. More importantly, this bill will lay the groundwork to allow calls to 911 PSAPs for the delivery of emergency services to be made from all communications technologies. The public will benefit from a more comprehensive, efficient and coordinated implementation, administration and operations of 911 services, and the timely and accurate dispatch of emergency first responders. The county and local public safety organizations will also benefit from improved efficiency and optimum use of resources.

The Wireless Enhanced 911 Board is preparing to expand wireless enhanced 911 coverage statewide into remote areas and public buildings with limited wireless coverage (such as the basement in the State Capitol), by building cell towers or placing antennas in these locations. This project will lessen the risk of the public being in distress and not being able to call 911.

Additionally, studies are being reviewed by the PSAPs to explore the migration from current e911 service to "Next Generation 911" service. Next Generation 911 systems are built on Internet Protocol (IP) to support 3rd Generation (3G) broadband and wireless telephony, including Voice-over-Internet-Protocol (VoIP), text messaging, streaming video, and Video Relay Services for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. This bill

would establish the basis for accommodating all of these improvements in enhanced 911 service.

In summary, this bill will help the State fulfill its most basic responsibility of protecting the health and safety of its citizens.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.