

# GONZALES COUNTY, TEXAS

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April 26, 2011

The Honorable John Carona  
Chairman, Senate Committee on Business & Commerce  
320 Sam Houston State Office Building  
Austin, TX 78711

RE: Support for SB 1848 (Hegar)

Dear Chairman Carona,

On behalf of Gonzales County and the Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission, I most strongly encourage your support of Senate Bill 1848, as it relates to the distribution of the emergency service fee for wireless telecommunications connections and the prepaid 9-1-1 emergency service fee.

As you know, jurisdictions like Gonzales County that are in the state 9-1-1 system administered by the Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC) receive dedicated fee revenue to maintain and operate the 9-1-1 system through the appropriations process while the 51 emergency communications districts and home rule cities that comprise the rest of the system receive their fees directly from the Comptroller. SB 1848 would at least partially alleviate this disparity by affording those of us in the state 9-1-1 system the same treatment as other jurisdictions with respect to 9-1-1 fees paid on wireless and prepaid wireless service.

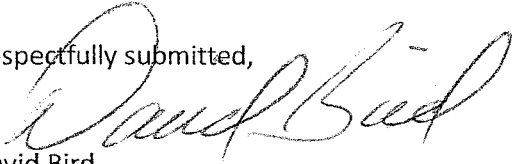
Beyond simply parity for our citizens in terms of the funding of their 9-1-1 services, SB 1848 would also provide a much more stable and predictable revenue stream for our region's emergency communications systems, encouraging a much more comprehensive planning process for equipment upgrading and replacement. CSEC currently maintains a 10-year equipment replacement schedule, allocating enough funds each biennium for a few regions to replace the equipment in their Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs). This system is hugely inefficient, and SB 1848 would provide regions with the ability to better manage capital equipment replacement, negotiate optimal pricing and undertake equipment replacement when it is needed.

The method of allocation proposed in this legislation will also, on some level, offset some of the decreases in available funding as being considered in the on-going budget discussion. 9-1-1 emergency communications services are of tantamount import to the residents of this County and this Region and it will fall to the responsibility of County and City governments to make up potential shortfalls in equipment replacement funding. This bill will lessen that burden on counties and cities around the state.

**I would ask that my letter be made part of the official record of the hearing on this legislation, and urge the Senate Business & Commerce Committee to report this legislation favorably at the earliest opportunity.**

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to provide input on this very important legislative initiative and look forward to answering any questions you might have.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David Bird".

David Bird  
Gonzales County Judge  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission

cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Business & Commerce