

CML Testimony in Support of House Bill 26-1115

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 26-1115. The Colorado Municipal League submits this written testimony in support of this bill. HB26-1115 makes important technical updates to ensure Colorado's prepaid wireless service charges are collected fairly, consistently, and in line with how prepaid wireless service is delivered today.

Over time, the prepaid wireless marketplace has evolved. Many consumers now receive prepaid wireless service through federally supported programs or through providers rather than traditional retail purchases. This bill appropriately clarifies that providers, including those offering federally supported or no-cost service to the end user, are still responsible for remitting the applicable charges. This ensures that all users of the system contribute equitably to the critical public safety, crisis support, and accessibility services these charges fund.

The bill also modernizes statutory definitions to reflect current business practices, including nontraditional transactions, and improves administrative efficiency by aligning reporting, remittance, and confidentiality provisions across the different enterprise funds. These changes will help the Colorado Department of Revenue administer the program more effectively and help enterprise programs accurately monitor collections.

Most importantly, HB26-1115 protects and strengthens funding streams that support essential services Coloradans rely on every day, including emergency response and telecommunications access. By closing gaps and clarifying existing statute, the bill promotes fairness, accountability, and long-term stability without increasing fees or imposing new burdens on consumers.

This is a thoughtful and necessary clean-up measure, and for these reasons, CML respectfully urges a yes vote today.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



OLATHE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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Date: February 17, 2026

Dear Members of the Colorado General Assembly,

On behalf of the Olathe Fire Protection District, I write in strong support of HB 26-1115, sponsored by Representatives Boesenecker and K. Stewart and Senators Roberts and Bright.

As the Chief of our department, together with our Board of Directors, we are deeply concerned about the significant funding gap created by the June 2025 Department of Revenue ruling that exempted certain unlimited prepaid wireless plans from 911 and 988 surcharges. This interpretation has resulted in an estimated \$17 million annual loss to 911 systems statewide and \$4 million annual loss to 988 services.

Our firefighters and emergency responders rely on a fully funded, technologically advanced, and properly staffed 911 system every day. The 911 infrastructure is the critical first link between the public and emergency services. When someone dials 911, seconds matter. Adequate funding ensures 24/7 call-taking capacity, dispatcher staffing, modern equipment, and seamless coordination with fire, EMS, and law enforcement agencies across Colorado.

Similarly, the 988 mental health lifeline plays an increasingly vital role in crisis intervention and behavioral health response. Ensuring that 988 remains accessible, confidential, and fully operational reduces strain on emergency departments, law enforcement, and first responders while connecting individuals to appropriate care.

Historically, all wireless users—including prepaid customers—contributed to these life-saving systems through surcharges. However, as prepaid wireless plans have shifted to unlimited models, outdated statutory definitions have inadvertently excluded many prepaid users from contributing at all. Without legislative correction, this funding gap may represent up to 10 percent of operating budgets for some local 911 authorities. That level of loss jeopardizes staffing, technology upgrades, and operational stability.

HB 26-1115 provides a fair and necessary solution by clarifying statutory language to ensure all prepaid wireless service plans contribute equitably to 911 and 988 funding. This measure restores critical revenue while ensuring that all phone users share responsibility for maintaining the emergency response systems upon which every Coloradan depends.

There are strong accountability measures already in place. 911 surcharge funds are distributed based on wireless call volume, allowable expenditures are defined in statute, and each 911 Governing Authority is subject to independent financial audits filed with the State Auditor's Office.

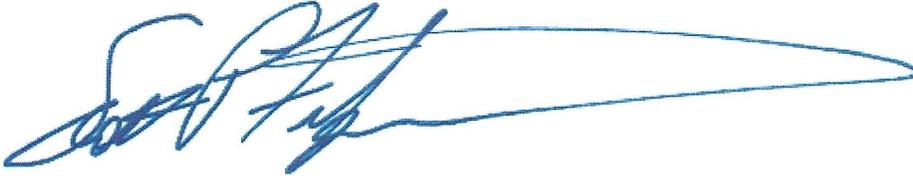
Public safety is a shared responsibility. Our firefighters see firsthand how essential a strong, reliable emergency communications system is to saving lives and protecting property. HB 26-1115 protects that system.

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For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to vote YES on HB 26-1115.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to the safety and well-being of Colorado communities.

Sincerely,



Scott P Fitzgerald, NR-P, CP-C.
District Chief
Olathe Fire Protection District



Lance Jones, Retired EMT/FF
President
Board of Directors, OFPD