

PRESS CONFERENCE ON NJ'S MISAPPROPRIATION OF 911 FEES
New Jersey Association of Counties & New Jersey Wireless Association

12:00 P.M. JANUARY 24, 2020

ROOM 103, STATE HOUSE, TRENTON, NEW JERSEY

1. Welcome Remarks
2. Michael Testa, *New Jersey State Senator (R-1)*
3. Marie Hayes, *NJAC President & Cape May County Freeholder*
4. Robert Ivanoff, *New Jersey Wireless Association*
5. Shaun Golden, *Monmouth County Sheriff*
6. Question and Answers

The New Jersey Association of Counties (NJAC) and the New Jersey Wireless Association (NJWA) are urging State leaders to comply with federal guidelines and restore critical 911 dollars to county and municipal 911 centers as the State of New Jersey has once again earned the distinction of being the worst offender of diverting 911 fees in the entire nation.

As one of only five states (*Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and West Virginia*) that continue diverting 911 fees, State leaders have created an emerging public safety issue and imposed a system of double taxation on residents who are already burdened with the highest property tax bill in the land. In fact, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) concluded in its recent "Annual Report on the Collection and Use of 911 Fees," that New Jersey diverted \$92,083,000.00 of the \$122,905,000.00 it collected in 911 fees in 2019. Moreover, the State has failed to provide any funding to local 911 centers operated by counties and municipalities by instead diverting the balance of collected 911 monies to cover general operating expenses in the Department of Law and Public Safety. As a direct result this longstanding misappropriation, the FCC adopted rules in 2018 that now prohibit New Jersey, and its counties and municipalities, from applying for millions in federal grant funding to upgrade 911 centers with Next Generation 911 (NG911) capabilities.

As has been well documented, counties and municipalities as first responders, handle the vast majority of the State's 911 calls through local public safety answering points (PSAPs); and, have come to inequitably rely on the collection of local property taxpayer dollars to improve, operate, and maintain 911 systems. County governments alone spent an estimated \$500.0 million over the last several years on capital improvements for facility upgrades, telephone systems, computer aided dispatch, location mapping technology, voice recording technology, data analytics, and NG911 upgrades. Counties also spend an estimated \$125.0 million per year on general operating expenses for salaries, staff training, system maintenance, network security, and IT consulting services. On the average, county governments provide some level of 911 dispatch services for approximately 73% of the municipalities located within their borders. In addition to restoring critical fund dollars, NJAC and NJWA are making the following recommendations: constitutionally dedicating any new 911 fees or surcharges imposed by the Legislature and collected by the State to county and municipal 911 centers; adopting the best practices outlined in the "New Jersey 911 Consolidation Study" published in 2006, which in part, calls for reducing the number of local 911 centers to streamline operations and save taxpayer dollars.

Contact: John Donnadio, NJAC (609) 394 – 3467 jdonnadio@njac.org
Robert Ivanoff, NJWA (908) 210 – 1547 rivanoff@copperhillventures.com