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**Chief Brad Shull
Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association
Senate Bill 50
Senate Financial Institutions and Technology Committee**

Chair Wilson, Vice-Chair Hackett, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Financial Institutions and Technology Committee. My name is Brad Shull and I am the Fire Chief of the Jefferson Township Fire Department here in Franklin County. Thank you for allowing me to testify on behalf of the Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association (OFCA) in support of Senate Bill 50.

This legislation accomplishes the important goal of constructing a statewide next-generation 9-1-1 system. I have had the opportunity to represent OFCA as a member of the PSAP Operations Subcommittee under the ESINet Steering Committee. As you have heard from prior witnesses, the ESINet Steering Committee has been working on this important effort for more than eight years.

All witnesses who have testified on SB 50 have agreed, Ohio's current 911 system has been in need of an upgrade for a very long time. As Ohioans have moved almost completely away from land-based telephones, our 911 system has not evolved with the changes in technology.

Under a statewide next generation 911 system, as outlined in SB 50, all Ohioans, no matter where they live, would be able to access:

- Voice and integrated text-to-9-1-1, from traditional and new devices, with the best possible location information, including location data from the device and available geographic information system (GIS) data.
- Calls easily transferred between jurisdictions, with increased collaboration to improve emergency outcomes.
- Significant reduction in the chance that any 9-1-1 call in the State of Ohio will ever go unanswered.

These vital upgrades to Ohio's 911 system would be funded by a 70-cent surcharge assessed monthly on wireless communications or services. This effectively extends it to include all devices capable of contacting 9-1-1, including those involving landline and Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) services.

The fee would be set at 70 cents for two years, and in years three through seven, the Ohio 9-1-1 Steering Committee could adjust the fee annually if needed, with no more than 2-cent increases back up to a



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maximum of 70-cents. In year eight, the fee would revert to 70 cents and the Steering Committee would provide a report to the General Assembly on the effectiveness of the fee and at what level the fee amount should be set going forward.

As you have heard from prior witnesses, there were real concerns about whether a 25-30 cent fee is sufficient to successfully implement this system. The Ohio Fire Chiefs shared this concern. I am not able to stand here today and tell you what the fee should be. The proposed 70-cent fee will ensure there is adequate funding for the vital work that the State of Ohio and local governments need to do to modernize our 911-system.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, this is the time to make an investment that I think we can all agree is long overdue. An investment that will modernize Ohio's 9-1-1 system and ensure that every Ohioan, no matter where they live or what device they are using, can get help from a first responder in their time of need.