



Delaware County Commissioners

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State Bill Eliminating Double Taxation on 9-1-1 Levies Passed

DELAWARE, Ohio — Delaware County can move ahead with preparing a 9-1-1 levy request for the November ballot, now that House Bill 277, a bill eliminating double taxation, has passed the Ohio legislature. Once signed by Gov. John Kasich, the new law will make it possible to exclude parts of the county that receive their 9-1-1 service from another agency from being taxed by the county for service they don't receive. The new law also applies to other counties throughout the state.

The conflict was discovered last year when county officials began preparing to seek renewal of a 9-1-1 levy that expires at the end of this year. The current 0.45-mill levy generates about \$2.25 million each year.

Research by the County Prosecutor's Office found the existing law would require them to tax all households in the county, regardless of which agency supplied 9-1-1 service. Delaware County had not been taxing residents of the county who receive their 9-1-1 service from Dublin, Westerville or Columbus, but, with a renewal effort, they likely would have had to tax those households, said Patrick Brandt, director of emergency communications for Delaware County.

"Without House Bill 277, 9-1-1 funding for Delaware County could have been in grave danger due to the amount of 'no' votes we would have received in the areas that would be double-taxed," Brandt said.

The effort to get House Bill 277 passed was a nail biter, coming down to the last day the Ohio legislature officially meets before adjourning until this fall. The bill was first introduced on June 25, 2015, by state Rep. Andrew Brenner (R-Powell). After spending months in committee, the bill passed a vote of the House on April 20. Then, because an emergency measure was added that would enable the law to go into effect immediately once signed by the Governor, the bill had to pass a vote of the Senate, then return to the House for one last vote. The Senate passed the bill last night at 7:45 p.m. by a vote of 33-0, and the House passed it by a vote of 90-0 at 10:54 p.m.

The timing of the bill's passage was critical to the Delaware County levy effort. The deadline for placing a levy on the November ballot is Aug. 10, but, until county officials knew if they could exclude the areas receiving Dublin, Westerville and Columbus 911 service, they could not calculate what the millage of the levy should be. Brandt said the board that directs 911 operations for the county will now work on a levy request to bring to the county's board of commissioners, who in turn must approve the request before it can be added to the November ballot.

"I would also like to extend our gratitude," said Brandt, "to City of Dublin council members, City of Dublin Manager Dana McDaniels, City of Dublin Police Technical Services Bureau Director Jay Somerville, and Washington Township Trustees for preparing and passing local resolutions of support for Delaware County and House Bill 277. Representative Margaret Ann Ruhl (R – Fredericktown) and Senator Kevin Bacon (R – Franklin County) also were incredibly helpful."

For more information about Delaware County's Office of Emergency Communications, please visit their website at <http://www.co.delaware.oh.us/delcomm/>.

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