

# Alaska State Legislature



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## Representative Kevin Meyer District 19

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## **House Passes Meyer's 911 Bill** **Cell Phones would Help Support Emergency Service**

(JUNEAU) – Cell phone users in Alaska could begin sharing the cost for enhanced 911 emergency services, under a bill passed today by the House.

House Bill 186, sponsored by Rep. Kevin Meyer (R-Anchorage), would allow municipalities to share the cost of the telephone emergency response system with an expanding base of users, and help fund expansion of 911 services to cell phone users as well, Meyer said.

“Nearly 25 percent of all 911 calls in Anchorage come from people calling on cell phones,” said Meyer. “With many other Alaska communities installing or expanding their own enhanced 911 systems, it is only fair that state law allow them to share the costs of providing this important public service to all users.”

Current state law allows municipalities to collect a monthly fee on hard-wired phones of 50 cents per line in municipalities with more than 100,000 residents, or 75 cents per line in smaller communities, but there are no similar fees on wireless telephone lines, Meyer said. The convenience of wireless phones has resulted in their being used for more and more 911 calls, especially motorists reporting accidents, unsafe drivers or road hazards.

“While current enhanced 911 technology allows emergency response operators to identify the origin of calls from hard-wired phones, it does not work on cell phones,” Meyer said. “This requires operators to take extra time to obtain the information from callers, lengthening calls and impeding rapid emergency response.”

Under HB 186, revenue generated by the surcharge on wireless phones would help fund purchase of the newest enhanced 911 equipment, which will provide operators with location information even from cell phones.

“It is clear that 911 services save lives, and there’s no reason that we should not extend these life-saving services to this expanding community of wireless phone users,” Meyer said.

HB 186 moves next to the Senate for consideration.

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**Broadcasters note:** Comments are available on the Majority Actuality Line 1-800-478-6540