

## ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 1805 (Ransom)

As Amended May 18, 2026

2/3 vote. Urgency

**SUMMARY**

Provides the California Department of Technology (CDT) oversight authority over the Next Generation 911 system, requires the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to submit quarterly reports regarding the development and implementation of, and the total and current year funding spent on, the Next Generation 911 systems, and requires the California State Auditor to conduct an audit regarding the implementation of the Next Generation 911 system by Cal OES.

**Major Provisions**

Removes the requirement that the Chief of the Public Safety Communication's Division serve as the Chair of the State 911 Advisory Board (Board), and adds a representative from the Department of Technology to the Board.

- 1) Authorizes the Board to hire an independent technical expert for advisory or oversight purposes, as specified.
- 2) Provides CDT with oversight power over the California 911 Emergency Communications Office on all of the following subjects:
  - a) Policies, practices, and procedures for the office.
  - b) Technical and operational standards for the state 911 system consistent with the National Emergency Number Association standards.
  - c) Training standards for county coordinators and Public Safety Answering Point managers.
  - d) Budget, funding, and reimbursement decisions related to the State Emergency Number Account.
  - e) Proposed projects and studies conducted or funded by the State Emergency Number Account.
  - f) Expediting the rollout of Enhanced 911 Phase II technology.
  - g) Changes to approved plans.
  - h) Evaluating transition plans.
  - i) Outcomes of reports, as specified.
- 3) Requires Cal OES to submit a quarterly report, on specified dates, to the Legislature, Legislative Analyst's Office, and the Board, regarding the development and implementation of, and the total and current year funding spent on, the Next Generation 911 systems, as specified.

- 4) Requires the State Auditor to conduct an audit regarding the implementation of the Next Generation 911 system by Cal OES that evaluates a number of related topics, as specified.
- 5) Requires the State Auditor to report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature, Cal OES, and other appropriate entities.
- 6) Authorizes the State Auditor to contract with technical experts to assist in fulfilling the requirements of the audit.

## COMMENTS

*Background:* The state's 911 system consists of 447 local dispatch centers (also known as Public Safety Answering Points, or PSAPs) that receive emergency calls from the public and dispatch first responders to assist. Since 2013, OES has been responsible for administering this system. The State 911 Advisory Board, which consists of 11 members, is responsible for advising OES on matters related to the state's 911 system. Funding for the state's 911 system comes from a monthly surcharge on telephone customers deposited in the State Emergency Telephone Number Account (SETNA). The 911 surcharge rate for calendar year 2026 is 41 cents. SETNA is expected to receive \$215 million in surcharge revenue in 2026-27.

*Transitioning From Legacy 911 to Next Generation 911:* OES is transitioning the state from "legacy 911" (designed to operate on copper landlines) to Next Generation 911. Next Generation 911 systems use Internet Protocol (IP)-based technology to send 911 data from one computer to another over the Internet. This technology allows 911 callers to share multimedia emergency communications (voice, video, photos, and text) and improved location data with dispatch centers. It also allows dispatchers to share this data directly with first responders. Additionally, Next Generation 911 systems can be used to automatically re-route 911 calls to other dispatch centers, which can help with high call volumes during natural disasters, large emergencies, or major events; or if one or more dispatch centers stop operating.

*Original Next Generation 911 Regional Plan:* California's approach originally involved dividing the state into four regions with a single statewide vendor serving as a back-up. These four regions are each served by a regional network service provider (or regional vendor) that is responsible for providing services to connect every dispatch center within their assigned region. The prime network service provider (or statewide vendor) is responsible for providing back-up services connecting all 447 dispatch centers statewide. The central purpose of this design is to ensure the system can survive failure. It does so by providing back-ups for network and core services (the software and databases needed to route emergency communications on the network) within each region and statewide, and by containing outages within a single area. The plan also required the regional and statewide networks to be interoperable without sharing any infrastructure. According to OES, Next Generation 911 network infrastructure "has been installed across the state and is now used to deliver both location services (911 caller location) and text-to-911" at all state dispatch centers.

Between July 2019 and August 2025, Next Generation 911 system development costs in accordance with the regional approach totaled \$456 million. The total cost to simultaneously operate legacy 911 during these same years was \$148 million. Additionally, the state provided support to dispatch centers totaling \$253 million.

*Delays and Issues:* The COVID-19 pandemic delayed the deployment of Next Generation 911. In addition, starting in 2021, 23 of the state's dispatch centers began transitioning voice calls from legacy 911 to Next Generation 911 with some experiencing difficulties. Specifically, some of these early adopters, such as Tuolumne County, reported experiencing call routing problems, outages, and dropped calls. In early 2025, OES paused the transition of additional dispatch centers in order to investigate. It found four main concerns: 1) Dispatch centers did not have a clear support process when it was necessary to report a trouble ticket; 2) Complexities of the network and interdependencies between the service providers created failure points; 3) The regional approach created a situation where both the technical and operational design were significantly adjusted from industry-standard practices, introducing fragility and risk; and 4) Call handling procedures in the hybrid legacy/Next Generation 911 configuration generated additional work for dispatch center staff. *New Next Generation 911 Transition Plan:* In November 2025, OES released an updated *2025 Next Generation 9-1-1 Transition Plan*. Under the updated transition plan, the state will switch from the regional approach to a statewide approach with two statewide network providers—one prime network service provider and a back-up. OES states that the switch to the statewide approach will eliminate the problematic interfaces and complexity while preserving system resiliency. It further notes that the statewide approach comports with Next Generation 911 system standards established by NENA and that it aligns with the "proven network architecture" used by other states. The regional vendors disagree with this assertion.

OES, in February 2026, indicated that it would deploy statewide Next Generation 911 services in three phases:

*Phase One.* In February 2026, OES reports it will execute an interim contract to move the dispatch centers that are currently using regional Next Generation 911 networks for voice calls to a statewide provider within 90 days. This portion has already been completed by Cal OES with the temporary "bridge" contract with Atos. Additionally, Cal OES will focus on deploying Next Generation 911 services to the Los Angeles area, to help prepare for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic games. In addition to these priorities, up to 20 other dispatch centers (those in most urgent need) will also be moved onto the statewide network. As a final part of phase one, in the fall of 2026, OES (in partnership with CDT) will establish long-term contracts with its statewide Next Generation (NG) 911 vendor.

*Phase Two.* During phase two (late 2026), OES will transition all dispatch centers to the new, long-term, primary statewide network vendor.

*Phase Three.* The final phase of the implementation plan involves decommissioning the legacy 911 system with a target date of 2030.

*LAO Report:* In February 2026, the Legislative Analyst's Office released a report on the NG911 System. That report asserts the following:

- 1) The NG911 project is significantly delayed and the cost estimate for the new approach is unclear.
- 2) Changing the system will bring tradeoffs, especially those related to system redundancy.
- 3) There are several key questions left unanswered, including:

- a) *What Is the Nature and Scope of the Problem?*
- b) *Will New Plan Solve the Problem?*
- c) *What Other Options Were Considered?*
- d) *How Do the Options Compare?*

The LAO recommends the Legislature:

- 1) Direct OES to pause implementation of them statewide approach until it can provide answers to the key questions.
- 2) Consider halting the project to allow an independent third-party to evaluate the state's options.
- 3) Require CAL OES to provide ongoing monthly project updates and quarterly fiscal reports.
- 4) Consider implementing a new governance structure to provide greater ongoing oversight of the 911 system.

#### **According to the Author**

"Implementing Next Generation 911 is vitally important to the safety of all Californians. However, as demonstrated by the latest transition plan provided by Cal OES, the Next Generation 911 system, and these new safety mechanisms, are once again delayed. As outlined by a recent report by the Legislative Analyst's Office, it is clear that the implementation of this project has faced serious management challenges. Walking away from Next Generation 911 is not an option. The Legislature has a key role to play in reorienting this project toward success. To do that, we need to understand what has gone wrong, and how the new proposal addresses all potential issues. That is why this bill directs the state auditor to complete a comprehensive audit of the Next Generation 911 system, provide oversight powers to the California Department of Technology, and strengthens reporting requirements. It is our responsibility to make sure modernization happens within a clear timeline and is implemented safely and responsibly for taxpayers."

#### **Arguments in Support**

None on file.

#### **Arguments in Opposition**

None on file.

### **FISCAL COMMENTS**

According to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations:

- 1) Costs of an unknown amount to CDT to serve on the Board and have oversight over the Office.
- 2) Cost pressures of an unknown amount, potentially in the hundreds of millions of dollars, to SETNA by granting CDT oversight over the Office, including budget, funding, and

reimbursement decisions related to SETNA. Funding for the state's 911 system from a monthly surcharge on telephone customers is deposited into SETNA, which is expected to receive approximately \$215 million in surcharge revenue in fiscal year 2026-27. Actual fiscal impacts would depend on future CDT decisions and the extent to which new programs, technologies, or operational models are mandated.

- 3) Costs pressures of an unknown amount, potentially in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, to the Board to hire an independent technical expert for advisory or oversight purposes General Fund (GF)).
- 4) Costs of an unknown, but potentially significant amount, to OES to produce the quarterly reports for the Legislature, the first of which is due in four months, and cooperate with the Auditor to facilitate the audit (GF).
- 5) Cost pressures of approximately \$850,000 to the Auditor to complete the audit (GF). The Auditor notes that it does not receive a per audit state budget appropriation. Instead, the Auditor would complete the work within its existing budget resources for all audits the Auditor must complete, either statutorily or by request of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC). Given the urgency clause in this bill and the audit's required start date of September 1, 2026, the NextGen 911 audit would likely take precedence over other approved JLAC requests.

## VOTES

### ASM EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: 7-0-0

**YES:** Ransom, Hadwick, Arambula, Bains, Bennett, Calderon, DeMaio

### ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4

**YES:** Wicks, Aguiar-Curry, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Hoover, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

## UPDATED

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