
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
Senator Henry Stern
Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 1805 **Hearing Date:** 6/23/2026
Author: Ransom
Version: 5/22/2026 Amended
Urgency: Yes **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Cassie Royce

SUBJECT: Emergency services: State 911 Advisory Board

SUMMARY: Makes various oversight changes related to the statewide implementation of the Next Generation 911 (NG 911) system by the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES).

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Warren 911 Emergency Services Act which specifies that 911 is the primary emergency telephone number for contacting emergency services within the state, and sets requirements for the 911 system.
- 2) Designates Cal OES as the agency responsible for administering the state's 911 emergency telephone system, including local dispatch centers known as Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), with funds from a 911 customer surcharge on intrastate communication service.
- 3) Establishes the State 911 Advisory Board (Board), comprised of 11 members appointed by the Governor from specified public safety agencies and emergency communications associations to advise Cal OES on technical and operational standards for the 911 system, funding for the system, and proposed additional 911 projects and studies.
- 4) Requires Cal OES to develop a plan and timeline for the testing, implementation, and operation of an NG 911 system, including text to 911 services.

This bill:

- 1) Makes the following changes to the Board:
 - a) Removes the requirement that the Chief of the Public Safety Communication Division serve as the Chair of the Board and, instead, makes the Chief a nonvoting member.
 - b) Adds a representative from the California Department of Technology (CDT) to the Board.
 - c) Authorizes the Board to make formal recommendations to Cal OES, as specified.
 - d) Provides that the Board may hire an independent technical expert for advisory or oversight purposes, as specified.
 - e) Requires Cal OES to timely share all information relevant to the Board, as specified, in order to receive timely actionable feedback from the Board.
- 2) Grants CDT oversight power over the California 911 Emergency Communications Office on specified subjects set forth in this bill.
- 3) Requires Cal OES to submit quarterly reports, on specified dates, to the Legislature, Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), and the Board, regarding the development and implementation of, and the total and current year funding spent on, the NG 911 system and the actions taken by Cal OES in response to recommendations made by the Board, as specified.
- 4) Directs the State Auditor to conduct an audit regarding the implementation of the NG 911 system by Cal OES that includes an evaluation of specified topics prescribed in this bill.
- 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.
- 7) Prohibits Cal OES from awarding a NG 911 contract until the audit is completed, as specified.
- 8) Contains an urgency clause.

Background

Author's statement. 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 authority to the Department of Technology, empowers the existing 9-1-1 Advisory Board, 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."

Statewide 911 System. California's existing 911 system includes 438 PSAPs that receive about 28 million 911 voice calls per year. These calls are dispatched to local first responders including police, ambulance, fire, medical and other emergency service providers. About 80 percent of all 911 calls are from wireless devices.

The Public Safety Communications Office within Cal OES administers the state 911 system, reviews local PSAPs' 911 equipment and operations, and reimburses their reasonable costs for planning, implementation, and maintenance of approved 911 systems. The California Chapter of the Emergency Number Association represents the state's PSAPs and provides research, planning, and training to support 911 dispatchers and the state 911 system. The Board advises Cal OES on operation, funding, and long-range planning for PSAPs and the state 911 system.

Prior NG 911 regional approach. SB 1211 (Padilla), Chapter 926, Statutes of 2014, directs Cal OES to develop a plan and timeline for the new system. Originally, Cal OES designed NG 911 as a regional system that used separate contractor vendors for each of four regions and a statewide backup provider. Two physical systems were connected to each PSAP (one primary and one backup). Each of the regional vendors established connectivity to each PSAP to increase redundancy. If any one vendor were to have an outage, the other vendors could continue providing services statewide.

Between 2021 and 2024, Cal OES began transitioning 23 PSAPs to the NG 911 system. However, in late 2024, Cal OES paused the project as reports emerged

identifying major flaws during this transition period, including dropped calls, outages, and the inability to route calls to the correct responding agencies. In several circumstances, affected PSAPs indicated that the NG 911 failures impacted emergency response capabilities at the local level and may have delayed emergency services.

By November 2025, Cal OES presented a Transition Plan to the State 911 Advisory Board and submitted a report to the Legislature on the status and plans for NG 911. In developing the report on the updated plan, Cal OES indicated they met with the initial 23 PSAPs that had partially transitioned voice calls, the regional vendors, the CDT, and the Advisory Board. Overall, Cal OES stated that the number of vendors involved increased the complexity during the transition and during troubleshooting, and that the regional approach was not viable, given the challenges associated with the handling of calls during the transition period, the ability to resolve issues among the vendors; and, the burdens of testing on PSAP staff.

Current implementation planning with a statewide model. In both the Transition Plan and the report to the Legislature, Cal OES proposed a new approach, shifting to a statewide, rather than a regional system, and the use of transitional elements to assist PSAPs as they migrated to the new statewide model. In February 2026, Cal OES released its Implementation Plan describing the next steps forward in implementing this new approach. According to the plan, Cal OES will initially enter into an interim contract to move the 23 partially-transitioned PSAPs to the network provided by the current statewide provider within the next 90 days. Cal OES also indicates that during this interim period, they intend to focus on transitioning the Los Angeles region PSAPs prior to the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic games, as well as other PSAPs with urgent needs.

After this interim period, Cal OES envisions implementing the new NG 911 approach in the following three phases: (1) establishing long-term contracts with statewide NG 911 providers, in partnership with CDT; (2) migrating all PSAPs to the statewide provider, and (3) decommissioning legacy 911. Cal OES anticipates awarding the long-term contracts in 2026, resuming the process of transitioning additional PSAPs in June 2027, completing the transition of all PSAPs by June 2030, and taking the legacy system offline by July 2030.

Bridge contract. As described in the Implementation Plan, the bridge contract is part of phase 1 of Cal OES' transition to a statewide NG 911 system. The bridge contract is an agreement with the current statewide backup provider, Atos, to immediately sustain existing NG 911 deployments; continue system implementation in priority regions; support migration planning and testing, and

maintain operational continuity while Cal OES partners with the CDT to conduct a competitive procurement for a permanent, long-term statewide contract. According to Cal OES, the bridge contract ensures Californians continue to receive reliable 911 service and allows for additional deployment of NG 911, particularly in high-priority areas like Los Angeles ahead of the 2028 Olympics and Paralympics. The cost of the 30-month contract is approximately \$80 million per year and became effective May 1, 2026.

LAO report. In February 2026, the LAO issued a report on the new statewide NG 911 proposal. The report noted a lack of transparency regarding the errors that occurred under the regional system and an absence of sufficient information about concrete steps Cal OES will take to ensure that the same mistakes are not repeated in the development of a statewide system.

Cal OES shared its written comments in response to the LAO report with the Committee. Cal OES writes that the statewide approach will resolve the inadequacies and flaws of the regional model because every element of the NG 911 system will be standardized and backed up. That requirement applies to specific technical components and to the overall combination of components. The NG 911 provider will supply not only backup technology configurations within a data center, but also multiple data centers, and multiple distribution networks utilizing separate physical paths to allow for failover, or the transition from one network to another when issues arise.

Potentially conflicting timing issue. This bill requires the audit to be completed before further long-term action can be taken on NG 911 implementation. Such a contingency may further hold up the rollout of the project, given that it is unclear when the audit will be finished. The Committee may wish to consider removing the contingency requirement to avoid the possibility of further delaying this critical public safety project.

Proposed amendments. To further clarify various provisions of this bill, the author is proposing amendments to do the following:

- 1) Specify procedures for the election of the Chair to the Board;
- 2) Clarify that the Board may hire an independent technical expert for advisory, not oversight, purposes;
- 3) Require Cal OES to enter into a contract or agreement with CDT or another qualified vendor for project oversight and independent verification and validation services;
- 4) Provide that CDT or another qualified vendor shall have oversight power over the California 911 Emergency Communications Office;

- 5) Clarify that the required quarterly reporting by Cal OES shall be yearly until the NG 911 system is fully implemented and the legacy system is decommissioned;
- 6) Remove the specified topics of the required audit and replace with audit objectives recommended by the State Auditor;
- 7) Incorporate provisions requiring Cal OES to contract with a specified research entity to complete an independent technical evaluation;
- 8) Make Cal OES employees, contractors and vendors affiliated with the NG 911 system subject to conflict-of-interest disclosures; and,
- 9) Prohibit Cal OES from awarding a contract or taking other specified action until the audit, technical evaluation and subsequent report to the Legislature are completed.

Due to legislative time constraints, these amendments that the author will accept in this Committee will be taken in the next committee hearing on this bill. The amendments are further described below:

Amend Section 1 as follows:

53115.1 (f) (1) The advisory board shall meet quarterly in public sessions in accordance with the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (Article 9 (commencing with Section 11120) of Chapter 2 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2). The division shall provide administrative support to the board. The board, at its first meeting, shall adopt bylaws and operating procedures consistent with this article and establish committees as necessary.

(2) At its first meeting of each calendar year, or at such other time as the Board deems appropriate, the Board shall elect one of its voting members to serve as Chair. The Chair shall be elected by a majority vote of the members of the Board present and voting, provided a quorum is present.

Amend Section 2 as follows:

53115.2. (c) The State 911 Advisory Board may hire an independent technical expert for advisory ~~or oversight~~ purposes. The board shall not hire an independent expert who has worked for the Office of Emergency Services, or a current or former vendor, in the prior two years.

Amend Section 3 as follows:

53115.2.1 (1) The Office of Emergency Services shall enter into a contract or agreement with the Department of Technology or another qualified vendor, provided that the vendor has no other financial interest in the state Next

Generation 911 project or system, for the Next Generation 911 project oversight and independent verification and validation services.

(2) The Department of Technology, **or another qualified vendor**, shall have 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) Expediting the rollout of Enhanced 911 Phase II technology.
- (d) Changes to approved plans.
- (e) Evaluating transition plans to complete the adoption of Next Generation 911.
- (f) Outcomes of reports pursuant to Section 53115.4.

Amend Section 4 as follows:

53115.4 (a) On or before the applicable dates specified in paragraph (1), the Office of Emergency Services shall submit a quarterly report to the Legislature regarding the development and implementation of, and the total and current year funding spent on, the Next Generation 911 system.

(1) The Office of Emergency Services shall submit each report required pursuant to this subdivision on or before January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1 of each year until the Next Generation 911 system is fully implemented and the legacy system is decommissioned. each of the following dates:

~~(A) The first report shall be submitted on or before October 1, 2026.~~

~~(B) The second report shall be submitted on or before January 1, 2027.~~

~~(C) The third report shall be submitted on or before April 1, 2027.~~

(d) Notwithstanding any other law, the Office of Emergency Services shall not award a contract, or issue a request for proposal for a contract, related to the Next Generation 911 system until ~~both~~ of the following are met:

(1) The audit described in Section 53115.5 is completed.

(2) The independent technical evaluation described in Section 53115.6 is completed.

~~(3)~~(2) The office submits a report to the Legislature, in accordance with Section 9795 of the Government Code, describing the actions the office has taken or will take to implement the findings and recommendations of the audit and technical evaluation described in Section 53115.5 **and 53115.6.**

(e) The office shall not take any action preventing the state from transitioning back to a regional network in the future until the audit, technical evaluation, and report as described in 53115.4 (d) is completed.

Amend Section 5 as follows:

53115.5 (a) The California State Auditor shall, in accordance with Chapter 6.5 (commencing with Section 8543) of Division 1 of Title 2, conduct an audit regarding the implementation of the Next Generation 911 system by the Office of Emergency Services. The audit shall commence no later than September 1, 2026.

(b) The audit shall include the following audit objectives ~~an evaluation of all of the following:~~

1. Evaluate the department's planning and execution of the regional and jurisdictional implementation of the Next Generation original 911 system that it subsequently canceled, and determine the following:

- a. The department's justification for its regional and jurisdictional implementation approach instead of a statewide or alternative approach. Evaluate the role of the 911 Advisory and Oversight Board, including the use and vetting of any consultants or outside entities in deciding upon the approach.*
- b. The extent to which the department sought input from local dispatch centers to understand their needs and operational challenges, as well as from the Department of Technology to understand state-level technical needs and challenges.*
- c. The processes through which the department assessed vendors based on qualifications, vendor readiness, and performance in the development of the system.*
- d. The timeline for when the department identified significant challenges and deficiencies with its regional implementation approach—including the specific nature of those challenges—and how the department justified proceeding with the project for several years despite these documented challenges.*
- e. Whether the department prevented regional systems from implementing or updating their own 911 systems in favor of the department's planned system.*
- f. The total cost of the department's implementation efforts, including the costs associated with work that was deployed and is operational, as well as work that was either unfinished or not deployed,. To the extent possible, determine the resulting monthly customer surcharge associated with both completed and uncompleted work.*
- g. The extent to which regional implementation efforts and infrastructure are salvageable.*

2. Determine the adequacy of the department's planning for restarting efforts on the Next Generation 911 system and evaluate the following:

- a. The implementation approach, timeline, funding plan, and cybersecurity plans intended to prevent similar challenges occurring on the previously cancelled project.
 - b. To the extent possible, any current cybersecurity gaps that the department needs to immediately address.
 - c. The involvement of the 911 Advisory and Oversight Board and the Department of Technology, as well as the suitability of contractors and outside parties involved in the revised planning and implementation effort.
 - d. Whether the department has identified the need for operational redundancies in the new system, and how those redundancies are being addressed through system planning, implementation, and testing.
 - e. Projected costs and timeline for the department to decommission the current 911 system and to fully implement the Next Generation 911 system at all 911 dispatch centers across the State. Include in this determination whether and by how much the department will need to increase 911 surcharges to fund implementation.
3. To the extent possible, determine the implementation approaches and related costs experienced by other states when deploying new 911 systems and identify potential best practices that focus on increasing system reliability and redundancy, ensuring effective and ongoing oversight, and reducing cost.
- (1) The office's rationale for the original regional implementation approach and the extent to which outside entities or contractors were consulted in that decision, regardless of whether they were hired or not.
 - (2) The office's current and prior vetting processes for vendor qualifications and an assessment of vendor readiness and performance in the development of the Next Generation 911 system.
 - (3) The nature and scope of the deficiencies identified in the regional approach, the timeline of when those deficiencies were documented, and the plans for ensuring the long-term sustainability of the system.
 - (4) Whether the proposed statewide plan is sufficient to resolve the challenges currently facing the project.
 - (5) The total lifecycle cost of the transition plan, including identified sunk and unrecoverable costs.
 - (6) A comparative cost-benefit analysis of maintaining the regional approach, adopting a hybrid governance model, or implementing statewide consolidation. This analysis shall include an assessment of costs, redundancy, and effectiveness

~~in addressing existing problems, and the projected timeline for decommissioning the legacy 911 system.~~

~~(7) Whether the office considered alternative implementation options beyond the regional and statewide models.~~

~~(8) The degree of redundancy required to ensure reliability within the state's risk environment.~~

~~(9) Whether regional systems were restricted from implementing system updates or were provided insufficient time to execute updates prior to the cancellation of the regional approach.~~

~~(10) The total cost of the unfulfilled regional project and the estimated costs of recommended options for future implementation of Next Generation 911.~~

~~(11) The systems in place to prevent future implementation errors.~~

~~(12) Whether the Department of Technology has been involved in the Next Generation 911 project, the extent of their involvement, and a determination of the appropriate level of the department's future or continued involvement.~~

~~(13) Estimated timelines for the full implementation of the Next Generation 911 system and the decommissioning of the legacy 911 system.~~

~~(14) The adequacy of cybersecurity and privacy protections currently in place or planned for the system.~~

~~(15) The role of the State 911 Advisory Board in the adoption of the regional approach and the development of the transition plan, and recommendations for specific oversight powers or responsibilities that should be granted to the board.~~

~~(16) The status of procurement efforts for a new statewide service provider.~~

~~(17) The benefits and detriments of utilizing a single, permanent vendor for Next Generation 911 delivery.~~

~~(18) Whether the Legislature should consider a statewide Next Generation 911 system with a regional backup.~~

Add Section 6 as follows:

53115.6 (a) Upon appropriation, Cal OES shall contract with a qualified federally funded research and development center to complete an independent technical evaluation.

(b) The independent technical evaluation shall evaluate, but not be limited to,:

1. The existing status of the Next Generation 911 system, including existing contracts and infrastructure.
2. The level of technical expertise necessary for vendors and contractors.
3. Degree of redundancy required to ensure reliability within the state's risk environment.
4. Applicable cybersecurity and privacy protections.

5. *Provide recommendations for how to implement a successful Next Generation 911 system in California.*
6. *Estimated timelines and costs to fulfill recommendations.*
7. *If applicable, projected timeline for decommissioning the legacy 911 system.*

(c) The center may collaborate with the California Department of Technology, as applicable.

Add Section 7 as follows:

53115.7 All employees of the Office, contractors, and vendors that work on or provide services for the Next Generation 911 system shall publicly disclose any conflicts of interest.

Related Legislation

SB 985 (Strickland) requires Cal OES to submit specified quarterly reports to the Legislature regarding the implementation of California's NG 911 system. (Pending in the Assembly Communications and Conveyance Committee)

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

SUPPORT:

None on file

OPPOSITION:

None on file

DUAL REFERRAL: Senate Emergency Management Committee & Senate Privacy, Digital Technologies, and Consumer Protection Committee