

Date of Hearing: July 1, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND CONVEYANCE

Tasha Boerner, Chair

SB 985 (Strickland) – As Amended June 10, 2026

SENATE VOTE: 33-0

SUBJECT: 911 emergency system

SUMMARY: Requires the Office of Emergency Services (OES) to provide quarterly reports to the Legislature on the development and implementation of the Next Generation 911 system, as specified. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the reports to document progress and challenges to develop and implement the Next Generation 911.
- 2) Requires the report to include information on proposed solutions to the identified challenges, including potential costs, implementation timelines, and progress on implementing the solutions.
- 3) Requires the report to include recommendations made by the State 911 Advisory Board and any actions taken in response to those recommendations, or decision that contradict those decisions.
- 4) Requires OES to submit a copy of each quarterly report to the chairpersons of the budget committees of both houses, and the appropriate subcommittees in each house, of the Legislature that consider the state budget, the Assembly and Senate Committees on Emergency Management, the State 911 Advisory Board, and the Legislative Analyst's Office on or before January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1 of each year.
- 5) Requires OES to continue to submit quarterly reports until Next Generation 911 is fully implemented and legacy 911 has been decommissioned.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the Warren-911 Emergency Assistance Act to require local public agencies to maintain an emergency communication system using "911" as the primary, universal emergency response number and requires OES to coordinate the implementation of 911 systems and support local agencies in the operation and improvement of 911 systems. (Government Code § 53100 et. seq.)
- 2) Requires Cal OES to develop a plan and timeline of target dates for the testing, implementation, and operation of a Next Generation 911 emergency communication system, including text to 911 service, throughout the State. (Government Code § 53121)
- 3) Establishes the State 911 Advisory 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. (Government Code § 53115.1 and 53115.2).

- 4) Establishes the Emergency Telephone Users Surcharge Act. (Revenue & Taxation Code § 41001 et. seq.)
- 5) Imposes a 911 surcharge on each telephone access line. (Revenue and Taxation Code § 41020)
- 6) Establishes a methodology for determining the 911 surcharge amount and limits the 911 surcharge to no greater than eighty cents (\$0.80) per access line per month. (Revenue & Taxation Code 41030)
- 7) Establishes the State Emergency Telephone Number Account, or SETNA. (Revenue and Taxation Code § 41135)

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Committee on Appropriations, “Cal OES estimates ongoing costs of \$237,000 annually (General Fund) for one position through the duration of NG 9-1-1 implementation to manage accelerated reporting timelines and required updates that are stipulated in this bill.”

COMMENTS:

- 1) *Double referral and committee jurisdiction.* This bill was first referred to the Committee on Emergency Management. Accordingly, this analysis will primarily focus on issues related to the Communications & Conveyance Committee jurisdiction such as surcharges imposed on telephone access lines and associated considerations.
- 2) *Author’s Statement.* “Emergency response is a core function of government, and 911 is the lifeline that connects the public to those critical emergency services. Californians should never have to wonder whether the system will work if they find themselves in a life-or-death situation. This administration made big promises and spent hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars, but failed to deliver a functioning, upgraded emergency response system. Instead, many 911 callers faced busy signals or were unable to get through at all. The Fix 911 Act provides transparency and legislative oversight so this never happens again. Accountability is not optional when public safety is at stake.”
- 3) *911 System Background.* California’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.
- 4) *Challenges with Transitioning to Next Generation 911.* OES is current transitioning the state’s 911 system 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 device to another over the Internet. The IP-based technology enables advanced features such as improved location data, multimedia communications (text, photo, voice), and more seamless routing of calls. For several years, the state has been aware of challenges and delays in implementing the system. Most recently in February 2026, the Legislative Analyst Office published a report highlighting the myriad of issues, and tradeoffs

to addressing the issue. The Legislature and Governor are working in partnership to implement those recommendations.

In the 2025 Budget Act (Wiener, Chap. 4, Stats. 2025), in order for OES to receive funds from SETNA, it required Cal OES to provide four reports (quarterly) to the Legislature on the progress of the NextGen 911 project. This was later reduced to a two report requirement in trailer budget bill language (Gabriel, Chap. 5, Stats. 2025). The report requirements in these budget bills are substantively similar to the requirements this bill seeks to codify until the NG911 system is implemented and the legacy system is decommissioned.

- 5) *Impact to 911 Surcharges.* Funding for the state's 911 system comes from a monthly surcharge on telephone customers deposited in the State Emergency Telephone Number Account (SETNA). Under existing law, the OES may impose a surcharge up to \$0.80 cents per access line. The 911 surcharge rate for calendar year 2026 is \$0.41 cents per access line. SETNA is expected to receive \$215 million in surcharge revenue in 2026-27. Based on the LAO's report of challenges to implantation of Next Generation 911, costs may increase to SETNA in order to get the Next Generation 911 implementation project back on track and fully implemented. However, the report didn't offer any estimates.

6) Related/similar legislation.

- a. AB 1805 (Ransom, 2026). The bill would provide the California Department of Technology (CDT) with 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 (NG911) system by Cal OES. (Currently in Senate Rules)

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Cal Fire Local 2881

California Association of Highway Patrolmen

Peace Officers Research Association of California (PORAC)

Opposition

None on file.

Analysis Prepared by: Emilio Perez / C. & C. / (916) 319-2637