

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

February 9, 2006

Senate Bill 2074 Making an Appropriation for Development
of a Non-Emergency Reporting System, Known as 3-1-1

Chair Ige and members of the Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs, I am Rick Tsujimura, representing T-Mobile USA, Inc. T-Mobile USA respectfully submits this testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 2074, which proposes the creation of a 3-1-1 system.

The concept behind this legislation is to prevent congestion of the 9-1-1 system due to inappropriate and other non-emergency calls. While T-Mobile firmly supports an efficient and effective 9-1-1 system for all emergency callers, we are concerned about the costs and unintended consequences of creating a new 3-1-1 system rather than addressing the concerns with the existing 9-1-1 program.

Inappropriate and non-emergency 9-1-1 calls have been experienced in many other jurisdictions around the country. Public education campaigns have proven to be a cost effective and successful way to dramatically reduce these non-emergency calls to 9-1-1. An example of this was in King County, Washington, where public school education, public service announcements, and other communications were developed to help people determine when it is appropriate to call 9-1-1 and how to prevent unintentional 9-1-1 calls. According to King County officials, the result was the reduction of inappropriate 9-1-1 calls from over 30% down to less than 17% in just a few months after implementing the program. The relative costs of this program were determined to be much less than the costs of implementing an entirely new 3-1-1 system. T-Mobile has participated in these public education programs by distributing brochures produced by public safety agencies in its retail stores.

Furthermore, T-Mobile is concerned about creating a new 3-1-1 system in an environment where people are already uncertain about when to call 9-1-1. The result of implementing 3-1-1 could result in more, rather than less confusion. In other words, if people are calling 9-1-1 inappropriately, what will motivate people to stop calling 9-1-1 once 3-1-1 is implemented? Or worse, T-Mobile is concerned that real emergency calls may get dialed to 3-1-1, which may lack caller identification information (phone number and location) causing hazardous delays and confusion – and possibly lawsuits. Nothing in this legislation gets to the core of the problem which is to prevent inappropriate 9-1-1 calls and assure an efficient and effective 9-1-1 system.

In addition, T-Mobile participated in the development of HB 2883 which became Act 159, legislation that will fund the development of Wireless E9-1-1. Deployment of these critical services is a big project for Hawaii's public safety agencies. T-Mobile feels the development of a 3-1-1 program during the implementation of Wireless E9-1-1 services may lead to delays in bringing these services to the citizens in the state.

As a strong advocate of public safety communications demonstrated by our commitment to deploying Wireless Priority Access, E-911, and other technologies, T-Mobile urges the Legislature to answer the following questions prior to implementing a 3-1-1 system:

- How much would an education campaign cost compared to a 3-1-1 system?
- How many inappropriate 9-1-1 calls would an education campaign eliminate?
- How will a 3-1-1 system be funded and will the critical 9-1-1 system be negatively impacted by the expenditure of funds on another network?

T-Mobile USA is grateful to have the opportunity to comment on this legislation. We urge the Legislature to scrutinize the existing situation and work with all interested parties to develop solutions that are cost-effective to maximize the benefits of Hawaii's 9-1-1 system. Thank you.