

Michael Bagley
Executive Director of Public Policy
West Area



Verizon Wireless
15505 Sand Canyon Avenue
Irvine, CA 92618
Phone 949 286-8008
Fax 949 286-8009
Mobile 949 683-8890
michael.bagley1@VerizonWireless.com

February 9, 2006

The Honorable Senator David Y. Ige
Chairman
Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs
Hawaii State Senate

Re: *Testimony on Senate Bill 2074 -- Support and Funding for a 311 System*

On behalf of Verizon Wireless, I am writing to express concerns regarding Senate Bill 2074, legislation which has the stated objective of creating a 311 system to benefit the Honolulu Police Department. The Department has stated that it would like to move forward with a 311 initiative to handle overflow from 911.

Verizon Wireless is a strong supporter of law enforcement, and the wireless industry in general is committed to working with emergency personnel and supporting a strong and effective 911 system for Hawaii. This is why wireless carriers supported HB 2883 in 2004, legislation which established a .66 fee on wireless customers for enhanced 911, and a Board to oversee the collection and administration of such funds. Interestingly, on February 9th 2004, this exact day two years ago, the Honolulu Police submitted testimony in support of the 911 legislation. We applaud that effort, but urge the Department to give the 911 law, including its funding mechanism, a chance to operate and address matter relating to the program, including potential overflow.

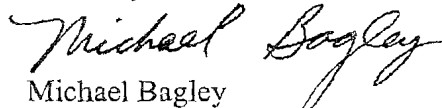
The main objection that we have with SB 2074 is that it seeks to place a new fee on our customers, who are already overburdened with taxes, and who already pay a .66 fee for 911. In fact, we estimate that wireless customers pay an overall 13.25% of their monthly bill currently for combined federal and state taxes, and surcharges and fees. They should not be asked to bear a new fee, when there is no strong case to be made that the current 911 fee is not adequate to address concerns raised by the Honolulu Police Department.

We urge the Committee to amend this bill to take the approach adopted by the legislature in 2005, which was to fund a 311 program only through the state general fund. Your constituents should not be asked to support this program with a new fee.

Finally, Verizon Wireless is in full support of including in an amended version of the bill, a new section on "limitation of liability as submitted by Cingular in its testimony.

We thank the Committee for its consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Bagley".

Michael Bagley
Executive Director of Public Policy
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