



March 12, 2019

Honorable Alan Redfield, Chair  
Honorable Becky Beard, Vice Chair  
Honorable Zach Brown, Vice Chair  
House Taxation Committee  
Montana State Legislature  
Helena, Montana

RE: Opposition to HB 618

Dear Chair Redfield, Vice Chairs Beard and Brown and Committee Members:

On behalf of CTIA, the trade association for the wireless communications industry, I write to you in opposition to House Bill 618, which would drastically increase the taxes paid by all Montanans who use wireless devices.

HB 618 adds a new fee of 95 cents per month per access line on each subscriber in the state for the operation, maintenance, sustainability, and expansion of the statewide public safety communications system. CTIA opposes this massive tax increase on wireless customers.

While the wireless industry supports public safety, we are opposed to the funding source in the bill, as it would require wireless consumers to pay fees on their bills to support programs that are unrelated to wireless service. Expenditures for general-purpose public safety programs, such as the statewide radio network, that have no connection to wireless services should not be funded by fees on wireless bills.

Since emergency communications service is an essential government service and provides a common benefit for all citizens, a strong public policy argument exists that these services should be funded through the broad-based taxes that finance general fund expenditures.

CTIA respectfully urges the committee not to move HB 618.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa V. McCabe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Director, State Legislative Affairs