

Date of Hearing: April 23, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Rhodesia Ransom, Chair

AB 1805 (Ransom) – As Amended April 13, 2026

SUBJECT: Emergency services: State 911 Advisory and Oversight Board

SUMMARY: Provides oversight authority to the 911 Advisory Board (to be renamed the 911 Advisory and Oversight Board), 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 system by Cal OES. Specifically, **this bill**:

- 1) Renames the State 911 Advisory Board to the State 911 Advisory and Oversight Board (Board), removes the requirement that the Chief of the Public Safety Communication's Division serve as the Chair of the Board, and adds a representative from the Department of Technology to the Board.
- 2) Authorizes the Board to hire an independent technical expert for advisory or oversight purposes, as specified.
- 3) Provides the Board with 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. Training standards for county coordinators and Public Safety Answering Point managers.
 - d. Budget, funding, and reimbursement decisions related to the State Emergency Number Account.
 - e. Proposed projects and studies conducted or funded by the State Emergency Number Account.
 - f. Expediting the rollout of Enhanced 911 Phase II technology.
 - g. Changes to approved plans.
 - h. Evaluating transition plans.
 - i. Outcomes of reports, as specified.
- 4) Requires Cal OES to submit a quarterly report, on specified dates, to the Legislature regarding the development and implementation of, and the total and current year funding spent on, the Next Generation 911 systems and requires the reports include the following:
 - a. Documentation of progress toward, and major challenges facing, statewide development and implementation of a Next Generation 911 system, including technological, operational, and legal or contractual challenges.
 - b. Proposed solutions to the identified challenges, the potential costs of such solutions, effects on and changes to the implementation timeline and expected date of completion, and progress made in implementing a solution.

- 5) Requires a copy of each report be submitted to the Chairs of the Budget Committees and Emergency Management Committees in both the Assembly and Senate, the 911 Advisory and Oversight Board, and the Legislative Analyst's Office.
- 6) Requires the State Auditor to conduct an audit regarding the implementation of the Next Generation 911 system by Cal OES that evaluates all of the following:
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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.
 - c. 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.
 - d. Whether the proposed statewide plan is sufficient to resolve the challenges currently facing the project.
 - e. The total lifecycle cost of the transition plan, including identified sunk and unrecoverable costs.
 - f. 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.
 - g. Whether the office considered alternative implementation options beyond the regional and statewide models.
 - h. The degree of redundancy required to ensure reliability within the state's risk environment.
 - i. 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.
 - j. The total cost of the unfulfilled regional project and the estimated costs of recommended options for future implementation of Next Generation 911.
 - k. The systems in place to prevent future implementation errors.
 - l. 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.
 - m. Estimated timelines for the full implementation of the Next Generation 911 system and the decommissioning of the legacy 911 system.
 - n. The adequacy of cybersecurity and privacy protections currently in place or planned for the system.
 - o. The role of the 911 Advisory and Oversight 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.
 - p. The status of procurement efforts for a new statewide service provider.
- 7) Requires the State Auditor to report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature, Cal OES, and other appropriate entities.

- 8) Authorizes the State Auditor to contract with technical experts to assist in fulfilling the requirements of the audit.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the State 911 Advisory Board comprised of the following members (Government Code § 53115.1):
 - a. The Chief of the Public Safety Communications Division as the nonvoting chair of the board.
 - b. One representative from the Department of the California Highway Patrol.
 - c. Two representatives on the recommendation of the California Police Chiefs Association.
 - d. Two representatives on the recommendation of the California State Sheriffs' Association.
 - e. Two representatives on the recommendation of the California Fire Chiefs Association.
 - f. Two representatives on the recommendation of the CalNENA Executive Board.
 - g. One representative on the joint recommendation of the executive boards of the state chapters of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials-International, Inc.
- 2) Requires the State 911 Advisory Board to advise Cal OES on all of the following subjects (Government Code § 53115.2):
 - a. Policies, practices, and procedures for the California 911 Emergency Communications Office.
 - b. Technical and operational standards for the California 911 system consistent with the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) standards.
 - c. Training standards for county coordinators and Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) managers.
 - d. Budget, funding, and reimbursement decisions related to the State Emergency Number Account.
 - e. Proposed projects and studies conducted or funded by the State Emergency Number Account.
 - f. Expediting the rollout of Enhanced 911 Phase II technology.
- 3) Requires the Advisory Board, upon request of a local public agency, to conduct a hearing on any conflict between a local public agency and the office regarding a final plan that has not been approved by the office related to local emergency telephone systems, as specified. (Government Code § 53115.2)
- 4) Establishes the California State Auditor's Office as an office independent of the executive branch and legislative control. (Government Code § 8543)
- 5) Requires the State Auditor's Office to examine and report annually upon the financial statements prepared by the executive branch of the state and to perform other related assignments, including performance audits, that are mandated by statute (Government Code § 8543.1)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. A fiscal committee has not analyzed this bill.

COMMENTS:

Author's Statement: "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 additional oversight powers to the 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."

Equity Statement: By requiring a comprehensive audit, strengthening oversight through the 9-1-1 Advisory Board, and improving reporting requirements, this bill promotes transparency and accountability in a system that all Californians rely on, but that has disproportionate consequences when it underperforms in vulnerable communities. Advancing a more reliable and modern emergency communications system helps ensure that all individuals, regardless of geography, language access, income, or ability, can equitably access life-saving services.

Background: The state'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. Funding for the state's 911 system comes from a monthly surcharge on telephone customers deposited in the State Emergency Telephone Number Account (SETNA). The 911 surcharge rate for calendar year 2026 is 41 cents. SETNA is expected to receive \$215 million in surcharge revenue in 2026-27.

Transitioning From Legacy 911 to Next Generation 911: OES is transitioning the state 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 computer to another over the Internet. This technology allows 911 callers to share multimedia emergency communications (voice, video, photos, and text) and improved location data with dispatch centers. It also allows dispatchers to share this data directly with first responders. Additionally, Next Generation 911 systems can be used to automatically re-route 911 calls to other dispatch centers, which can help with high call volumes during natural disasters, large emergencies, or major events; or if one or more dispatch centers stop operating.

Original Next Generation 911 Regional Plan: California's approach originally involved dividing the state into four regions with a single statewide vendor serving as a back-up. These four regions are each served by a regional network service provider (or regional vendor) that is responsible for providing services to connect every dispatch center within their assigned region. The prime network service provider (or statewide vendor) is responsible for providing back-up services connecting all 447 dispatch centers statewide. The central purpose of this design is to

ensure the system can survive failure. It does so by providing back-ups for network and core services (the software and databases needed to route emergency communications on the network) within each region and statewide, and by containing outages within a single area. The plan also required the regional and statewide networks to be interoperable without sharing any infrastructure. According to OES, Next Generation 911 network infrastructure “has been installed across the state and is now used to deliver both location services (911 caller location) and text-to-911” at all state dispatch centers.

Between July 2019 and August 2025, Next Generation 911 system development costs in accordance with the regional approach totaled \$456 million. The total cost to simultaneously operate legacy 911 during these same years was \$148 million. Additionally, the state provided support to dispatch centers totaling \$253 million.

Delays and Issues: The COVID-19 pandemic delayed the deployment of Next Generation 911. In addition, starting in 2021, 23 of the state’s dispatch centers began transitioning voice calls from legacy 911 to Next Generation 911 with some experiencing difficulties. Specifically, some of these early adopters, such as Tuolumne County, reported experiencing call routing problems, outages, and dropped calls. In early 2025, OES paused the transition of additional dispatch centers in order to investigate. It found four main concerns: (1) Dispatch centers did not have a clear support process when it was necessary to report a trouble ticket; (2) Complexities of the network and interdependencies between the service providers created failure points; (3) The regional approach created a situation where both the technical and operational design were significantly adjusted from industry-standard practices, introducing fragility and risk; and (4) Call handling procedures in the hybrid legacy/Next Generation 911 configuration generated additional work for dispatch center staff.

New Next Generation 911 Transition Plan: In November 2025, OES released an updated *2025 Next Generation 9-1-1 Transition Plan*. Under the updated transition plan, the state will switch from the regional approach to a statewide approach with two statewide network providers—one prime network service provider and a back-up. OES states that the switch to the statewide approach will eliminate the problematic interfaces and complexity while preserving system resiliency. It further notes that the statewide approach comports with Next Generation 911 system standards established by NENA and that it aligns with the “proven network architecture” used by other states.

OES, in February 2026, indicated that it would deploy statewide Next Generation 911 services in three phases:

Phase One. In February 2026, OES reports it will execute an interim contract to move the dispatch centers that are currently using regional Next Generation 911 networks for voice calls to a statewide provider within 90 days. After these dispatch centers have been migrated, OES will focus on deploying Next Generation 911 services to the Los Angeles area, to help prepare for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic games. In addition to these priorities, up to 20 other dispatch centers (those in most urgent need) will also be moved onto the statewide network. As a final part of phase one, in the fall of 2026, OES (in partnership with CDT) will establish long-term contracts with its statewide Next Generation 911 vendor. As part of this procurement process, OES will “require the statewide provider to propose and demonstrate the ability to reach an availability level of

99.999% or better, and the ability to utilize multiple data centers, distribution networks, and aggregation sites.”

Phase Two. During phase two (late 2026), OES will transition all dispatch centers to the new, long-term, primary statewide network vendor. Transitional elements will be used. This will, among other things, allow dispatch centers to move to the Next Generation 911 network individually. (OES notes that under the previous approach, dispatch centers that transfer calls amongst each other had to migrate together, in a group.)

Phase Three. The final phase of the implementation plan involves decommissioning the legacy 911 system with a target date of 2030.

Regional Vendors Disagree With Cal OES Assertions: Some of the regional vendors disagree with Cal OES’s assertions. They argue (abridged version of arguments provided by regional vendors):

- 1) NG911 vendors delivered a system built to meet exactly what California law required supporting accurate call routing, reliable delivery, real-time location availability, end-to-end IP interoperability, and full compliance with Cal OES’s own NG911 implementation plan.
- 2) The operational issues Cal OES references were early-stage transition challenges — temporary, predictable hurdles that were resolved years ago and are emblematic of any statewide technology modernization effort of this scale.
- 3) The new proposal does not simplify the network, rather it removes regional resilience, centralizes critical infrastructure, increases statewide outage risk, and forces taxpayers to pay for an unnecessary new system when the original was already built, tested, interoperable, compliant, and operational.

LAO Report: In February 2026, the Legislative Analyst’s Office released a report on the NG911 System. That report asserts the following:

1. The NG911 project is significantly delayed and the cost estimate for the new approach is unclear.
2. Changing the system will bring tradeoffs, especially those related to system redundancy.
3. There are several key questions left unanswered, including:
 - a. *What Is the Nature and Scope of the Problem?* For example, have the regional networks experienced systematic technical failures or are the problems a reflection of management and coordination challenges?
 - b. *Will New Plan Solve the Problem?* What evidence is there showing that the transition to a statewide approach will solve the problems identified by OES? Is there enough redundancy in the new approach?
 - c. *What Other Options Were Considered?* Does the state need to transition to a statewide approach to solve these problems, or can they be solved within the regional approach as it currently exists? What other options have been explored?
 - d. *How Do the Options Compare?* How do different options compare on parameters such as cost, effectiveness of addressing the problems encountered to date, and length of time to decommission the legacy 911 system?

The LAO recommends the Legislature:

- 1) Direct OES to pause implementation of the statewide approach until it can provide answers to the key questions.
- 2) Consider halting the project to allow an independent third-party to evaluate the state's options.
- 3) Require CAL OES to provide ongoing monthly project updates and quarterly fiscal reports.
- 4) Consider implementing a new governance structure to provide greater ongoing oversight of the 911 system.

Latest News: Cal OES is now considering a single statewide system, removing the back up option, and requiring the statewide system to have multiple redundancies. It is unclear whether a single system can effectively create multiple redundancies to ensure the system is 99.999% effective.

Related Legislation:

SB 985 (Strickland, 2026). This bill would require the Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to submit specified reports to the Legislature regarding the implementation of California's Next Generation 911 (NG 911) system. (Currently in Senate Appropriations)

Committee Amendments: The author is taking the following amendments, which adds an urgency clause, temporarily prohibits Cal OES from moving forward with NG911 contracting, and adds additional topics to be considered by the audit:

Amendment 1

In the title, in line 5, strike out "services." and insert: services, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

Amendment 2

On page 6, between lines 36 and 37, insert:

(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 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 described in Section 53115.5.

Amendment 3

On page 8, between lines 13 and 14, insert:

- (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.

Amendment 4

On page 8, below line 21, insert:

SEC. 5. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within the meaning of Article IV of the California Constitution and shall go into immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are:

To ensure that the Office of Emergency Services and the Next Generation 911 project are adequately planned and prepared to imminently bear the responsibility for the health and safety of Californians utilizing emergency 911 services, it is necessary for this act to take effect immediately.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.

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