



Mayor Lisa Brown

June 26, 2025

Spokane County Commissioners
Commissioner Mary Kuney, Chairperson
Commissioner Al French
Commissioner Chris Jordan
Commissioner Josh Kerns
Commissioner Amber Waldref
SREC Board Members

1116 W Broadway Ave.
Spokane, WA 99260

Sent Via E-Mail Addresses

Re: Equitable Apportionment of Sales and Use Tax and 911 Excise Tax

Dear Commissioners,

We are in receipt of communication from the SREC Board notifying the City of Spokane that SREC “will no longer serve as the primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for the City of Spokane Fire Department effective 12:00am on January 1, 2026.” This unilateral and arbitrary deadline will place lives at risk. Indeed, independent subject matter experts recommend *at least* 18 months to stand up a new PSAP.

In the interests of public safety for all residents and visitors served by the 911 system and fairness to all taxpayers in the region, the City does not accept a termination until we have finalized a plan for the safe and smooth transition to a City PSAP and resolved the issue of equitable apportionment.

As you know, the City of Spokane’s Fire Department (SFD) joined SREC as a fully participating agency in late 2022 and began paying user fees (approximately \$2.5 million per year). SFD accounts for roughly 55% of all 911 Fire-related calls across the County. Spokane Police Department (SPD) has always operated its own dispatch system and began serving as a secondary PSAP on October 31, 2022. SPD accounts for 55-60% of the County’s 911 law enforcement calls.

SREC’s first correspondence to this Administration was sent on April 19, 2024. It demanded that SPD join SREC or SFD would be removed from SREC. Since then, the City conducted due diligence with regard to a fair and responsive regional emergency communications

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center. We hired a consultant to conduct a feasibility assessment, we recommended a facilitator to help us resolve the consultant's findings (a request that was summarily rejected by the SREC Board), we met with the SREC and County transition committee multiple times, and we attempted to resolve our primary concerns around governance, service levels and finances by:

- Proposing alternative governance models that retain the City's minority representation on the Board, center subject matter experts, and facilitate elected oversight of taxpayer dollars.
- Identifying opportunities to increase financial capacity by financing large purchases, driving down user fees passed onto jurisdictions and their taxpayers, and ensuring that revenue and expenditures are brought in line.
- Suggesting service level assurances to safeguard the needs and expectations of the public.

Each of these proposals have been rejected by SREC who has maintained a "take it or leave it" posture toward the County's largest municipality that accounts for 42% of the population, nearly half of the relevant tax revenue, and over 50% of 911 emergency call volume. The City recognizes that SREC must balance the needs of participating rural agencies. The regional emergency communications center should also be responsive to the unique needs of the region's largest City that serves as the hub for commerce, employment, health services, and major regional events, which draw visitors from neighboring cities and states and drive up demand for emergency services within the City.

The City has consistently demonstrated a sincere willingness to resolve concerns regarding governance, finances and services. These issues were not resolved over the course of several meetings with SREC and County officials, or during the recent mediation. Since the SREC mediation on June 11 did not result in an agreeable resolution, we must resolve the issue of equitable apportionment of the sales and use tax (RCW 82.14.420) and the 911 excise tax (HB 1258). To further that discussion and to enable to parties to reach an agreement on the equitable apportionment of both taxes, the City and County must meet to resolve the elements of equitable apportionment including finances and service level no later than July 15, 2025.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Brown".

Mayor Lisa Brown