

**Subject** Public safety radio and crime victims account fee

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## Overview

Following 9/11, Minnesota (like other states) began the process of creating a statewide communications system that could be used by all public safety entities in the state. Before establishing the new system, local governments were responsible for establishing and maintaining their own network. The system began operations within the Twin Cities metropolitan area in 2004. It expanded to include St. Cloud and Rochester, and eventually covered the entire state. The state, through the Department of Transportation, maintains the infrastructure for the statewide system, but local governments who choose to participate are responsible for purchasing and upgrading portable radios that operate with the system and can also choose to enhance their system to improve local coverage.

The federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) of 1984 established a crime victims fund that consists of fines and penalties from convictions in federal cases. The federal government distributes money from the account to states to support organizations providing services to victims of crime. The amount of money in the fund has varied widely since its inception. In 2000, the federal government placed a cap on the amount of money available for distribution every year. The amount available for distribution peaked in 2018 at \$3.85 billion. It decreased to \$1.8 billion in 2023 and \$1.2 billion in 2024 before increasing to \$1.9 billion in 2025.

This bill establishes a monthly fee of \$0.50 on all phone lines. The fee must be deposited into a special account. Half of the money must be used for grants to local governments and Tribal entities to purchase portable radios for use with the statewide Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) public safety radio communication system. The other half of the money must be used to provide grants to organizations that provide services to victims of crime.

## Summary

Section	Description
1	<p><b>Emergency telecommunications service fee; account.</b></p> <p>Establishes a fee of \$0.50 on all phone lines to cover the costs of portable radios that can be used with the statewide Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) public safety radio communication system and for grants to crime victims organizations.</p>
2	<p><b>Fee collection declaration.</b></p> <p>Makes a conforming change related to the new monthly fee on all phone lines.</p>
3	<p><b>Public safety radio and crime victims account.</b></p> <p>Establishes the public safety radio and crime victims account in the special revenue fund. Appropriates half of the money in the fund for use in providing grants to local governments and Tribal entities to purchase portable radios for use with the statewide Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) public safety radio communication system. Requires a local match of at least five percent. Appropriates the other half of the money for grants to organizations providing services to victims of crimes. Requires an annual report on the amount of money collected and the grants awarded. Establishes that the fee expires on June 30, 2033.</p>
4	<p><b>Fee.</b></p> <p>Makes a conforming change.</p>
5	<p><b>Fees imposed.</b></p> <p>Makes a conforming change establishing that the \$0.50 fee for portable radios and grants to organizations providing services to crime victims applies to cell phones.</p>
6	<p><b>Fee collected.</b></p> <p>Makes a conforming change related to the new fee for portable radios and grants to organizations providing services to crime victims.</p>
7	<p><b>Remittance.</b></p> <p>Makes a conforming change related to the new fee for portable radios and grants to organizations providing services to crime victims.</p>
8	<p><b>Exclusion for calculating other charges.</b></p> <p>Makes a conforming change related to the new fee for portable radios and grants to organizations providing services to crime victims.</p>

Section	Description
9	<b>Remittance.</b> Makes a conforming change related to the new fee for portable radios and grants to organizations providing services to crime victims.
10	<b>Fees deposited.</b> Makes a conforming change related to the new fee for portable radios and grants to organizations providing services to crime victims.



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