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*MIRS Midday Update - State Could Net \$5M By Opening Up Police Tower ---- 12:33 p.m.*

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**Tuesday, January 24, 2012**

The state of Michigan could make \$3-\$5 million a year by selling space on its public safety communication towers in the Upper Peninsula and other locations across the state that don't have a commercial cell tower presence.

Bradley **STODDARD**, director of the Michigan Public Safety Communication System (MPSCS), told a House panel today that if certain laws are changed regarding the system's bonding, more federal and commercial usage is possible.

Current laws only allow tower usage by law enforcement, public safety entities, state government and a select handful of private entities like the Red Cross and utility companies. Stoddard said expanding MPSCS tower usage would simply be "leveraging an existing investment."

The House Energy and Technology Committee questioned about Stoddard about the steps that would need to be taken and was informed Rep. Gail **HAINES** (R-Waterford) is working on the needed legislation.

The big step is to lift a 3 percent restriction on "non-taxable" bonds by refinancing to "taxable" bonds, Stoddard said. This would allow expansion of use by private entities, which he said is currently maxed out.

Stoddard said certain federal agencies are considered private entities.

Commercial broadband providers would not interfere with public safety communication, as they run on a different frequency, Stoddard said. Also, the Federal Communications Commission has what is called a "guardband," which is a safety net between frequencies.

Stoddard said the change would not equate to state competition with the private sector as many MPSCS towers are in areas where commercial groups would not place towers, like rural areas of the Upper Peninsula.

During testimony he said other states have made similar decisions to "collocate" with commercial groups. Allowing expansion would mean better broadband service for the state, he said, especially rural areas, without having to build additional towers. [http://www.mirsnews.com/alert.php?alert\\_id=739](http://www.mirsnews.com/alert.php?alert_id=739)

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