

Information Technology Committee

Interim meeting September 25, 2014

State Radio System

North Game & Fish Department Presentation

Chairman Weisz, committee members.

I am Chief Game Warden Robert Timian with North Dakota Game & Fish Department

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on use, issues and concern with regard to the radio broadcast system.

In keeping with the time allotted my comments will focus on what we view as the major concerns and issues.

First our current voice use of the radio system has been greatly reduced over time with the introduction of the cell phone. This; however, does not reduce the system's importance as an emergency response system.

Technology advances now allow the officer a have a hundred or more different radio frequencies in a single radio, and to connect with numerous data bases. We now can do some amazing things due to advanced technology, but it does come with some costs and not just monetary. It seems at least to me that some of the basics that I took for granted when I was a young Game Warden using the radio are not what they once were. One of those was back then was when I talked on the radio not only could the base operator hear me, but any officer within range of my radio. New technology with data transfer and its availability to the officer in field is important and useful; but the foundation of the system should remain unchanged. That foundation is, when an officer calls for help, he needs to be heard and responded to immediately. The ability to be heard should also include other officers with range of his radio regardless of agency. This needs to be simple, effective, and reliable, because in an emergency, the officer generally does not have the time or possibly the ability to navigate a complex system.

The other issue is funding, how and who is this going to be paid for and how much. It does little good to implement new technology if the end user does not have the funds to pay for equipment upgrades to be able to utilize the improvements. I would hope any study done would address this.

I believe that State Radio and all other emergency communication systems in the state continually look for ways to continue to provide for the citizens of this State effective emergency communication, as an integral part of this is a ground up study to assist in a comprehensive state wide plan. The standard they set for themselves is high, but it needs to be. In baseball a hitting average of 40% is hall of fame material, in school 70% is passing, in an emergency when a call is made and the life of a citizen or officer is on the line, it's pass/fail and failure is not acceptable.

Thank you for your time.