

2023 HOUSE TRANSPORTATION

HB 1336

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Transportation Committee
Room JW327E, State Capitol

HB 1336
1/19/2023

A bill relating to special license plates for emergency responders, firefighters, and search and rescue personnel.
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Chairman D. Ruby opened the hearing at 9:27 AM.

Members present: Chairman Ruby, Representatives Anderson, Christensen, Dyk, Frelich, Hauck, Koppelman, Murphy, Timmons, Wagner, Weisz, Dakane, Dobervich. **Members absent:** Vice Chairman Grueneich.

Discussion Topics:

- Volunteer search and rescue license plates
- Volunteer first responders license plates

Representative Koppelman verbally introduced the bill in support.

Allen Scheirer, Valley Rescue Team, verbally testified in support.

Sean Johnson, Search and Rescue volunteer, testified in support virtually (#14481).

Travis Bateman, Badlands Search and Rescue and Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota, testified virtually in support (#13382).

Additional written testimony:

William Socwell, Reeder Fire Rescue, testimony in support #14292.

Chairman Ruby closed the hearing at 10:09 AM.

Mary Brucker, Committee Clerk

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Transportation Committee
Room JW327E, State Capitol

HB 1336
2/2/2023

A bill relating to special license plates for emergency responders, firefighters, and search and rescue personnel.
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Chairman D. Ruby opened the meeting at 10:29AM.

Members present: Chairman Ruby, Vice Chairman Grueneich, Representatives Anderson, Christensen, Dyk, Frelich, Hauck, Koppelman, Murphy, Timmons, Wagner, Dakane, Dobervich. **Members absent:** Representative Weisz.

Discussion Topics:

- Water and dive personnel
- Full time firefighters
- Committee vote

Committee discussion.

Representative Koppelman moved a Do Pass.
Vice Chairman Grueneich seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Representatives	Vote
Representative Dan Ruby	Y
Representative Jim Grueneich	Y
Representative Karen A. Anderson	Y
Representative Cole Christensen	Y
Representative Hamida Dakane	Y
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	Y
Representative Scott Dyk	Y
Representative Kathy Frelich	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	Y
Representative Ben Koppelman	Y
Representative Eric James Murphy	Y
Representative Kelby Timmons	Y
Representative Scott Wagner	Y
Representative Robin Weisz	AB

Motion carried. 13-0-1 Carrier: **Representative Koppelman**

Chairman D. Ruby adjourned at 10:45 AM.

Mary Brucker, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1336: Transportation Committee (Rep. D. Ruby, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (13 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1336 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2023 SENATE TRANSPORTATION

HB 1336

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Transportation Committee
Fort Totten Room, State Capitol

HB 1336
3/2/2023

A BILL for an Act, relating to special license plates for emergency responders, firefighters, and search and rescue personnel.
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1:51 PM Chairman Clemens called the hearing to order.
Chairman Clemens, Senators Conley, Larsen, Paulson, Rummel were present.

Discussion Topics:

- First responder
- Changes
- Contracts

1:52 PM Representative Koppelman introduced the bill.

1:57 PM Senator Rummel moved a **DO PASS**

1:57 PM Senator Larson seconded.

Senators	Vote
Senator David A. Clemens	Y
Senator Cole Conley	Y
Senator Doug Larsen	Y
Senator Bob Paulson	Y
Senator Dean Rummel	Y

Motion passed 5-0-0

Senator Larsen will carry the bill.

Additional written testimony:

Allen Scheurer #21753
Travis Bateman #21245
Sean Johnson #21708

1:57 PM Chairman Clemens adjourned the hearing.

Patricia Wilkens, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1336: Transportation Committee (Sen. Clemens, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (5 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1336 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

TESTIMONY

HB 1336

Testimony of Travis Bateman, Founder/Director
Badlands Search and Rescue
Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota

In Support of HB 1336

1/15/2023

Chairman Ruby and members of the House Transportation Committee:

I am Travis Bateman, and I am representing Badlands Search and Rescue (Badlands SAR) and the newly formed Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota (SARVAND) testifying in support of HB 1336.

Both organizations are based out of Watford City but there are members across North Dakota and our primary purpose is to assist law enforcement and emergency services in search and rescue incidents of lost, injured, missing, or otherwise distressed persons and return them to a place of safety or to medical care. Badlands Search and Rescue was founded in September 2018 and currently has a membership of 25, with eight being on for two years or longer.

Our team does not receive any government funding. Our members supply all their own gear, vehicles, fuel, hotel, food, and other applicable costs when responding and operating on missions. The organization provides training and certification, some additional equipment, and insurance coverage but we survive solely off donations and sometimes grant funds.

With that, one modification that may be needed with the language of the bill or at least discussed is that pertaining to the license plate numbers as we have members over various counties and therefore ZIP codes. However, if it is to go off where the organization is based, then the language would suffice as it currently is written.

As the founder and director of Badlands SAR and SARVAND I speak in support of this bill to recognize and assist our volunteer members with this recognition by license plate. As stated above, our members pay out of pocket to respond to SAR incidents. To date, those have been as far as Fort Yates, ND and have been as many as four nights worth of hotel and food expenses. We have very dedicated members that will still foot those costs regardless of this bill, but the offset of vehicle registration in addition to the further identification feature the license plates would provide would serve as a thank you from the state for their services and a morale booster that highlights what they are doing is appreciated and doesn't go unseen.

We have members that are preparing to go to training in Mississippi as they purchased their own bloodhound trailing dogs specifically to benefit our team and therein, North Dakota. All at their own expense. Again, what this bill seeks to do would be an excellent aid in helping them throughout each year as they provide these fully volunteer services.

Lastly, this bill came as a surprise to me. I only came across it reviewing what bills were scheduled and open for providing testimony and I was humbled to see that someone had submitted this action. There are many water rescue, dive/rescue, and dive/recovery teams under government agencies in North Dakota and they too work tirelessly, often in volunteer status, and are ever so deserving of what this bill aims to do and provide.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee and express my support for this bill and for your continued commitment to working together to address items like this for North Dakotans but especially those that volunteer to do everything they can in service of their fellow human beings. I urge you to support HB 1336.

On behalf of our members,

Travis F. Bateman

Travis F. Bateman
Founder / Director
Badlands Search and Rescue
Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota

As an past member of the ND SAR Advisory Committee, EMS squad leader, LEO and Emergency Management exercise designer, I would strongly urge the legislature to act favorable on this proposal. Search and Rescue is a very under represented discipline in North Dakota, especially when compared to neighboring states. Currently there is no consistent standard for SAR operation and few dedicated resources. What expertise does exist in ND is in

This measure would give SAR volunteers a much needed recognition of their dedication and expertise.

Sean M. Johnson
6405 Preston Loop
Bismarck, ND 58504
(701) 391-5326

House Transportation Committee
68th Legislative Assembly
January 19, 2023

Testimony in Support of HB 1336 with Recommended Amendment

Honorable Members of the North Dakota House Transportation Committee

My name is Sean Johnson, and I testify as a private citizen in support of HB 1336. This bill would extend the availability of special license plates for volunteer first responders to volunteer search and rescue (SAR) professionals. I have been a member of a volunteer search and rescue organization since 1997 and served in several SAR capacities including ground search team member, aircrew search observer, safety officer; and in mission staff capacities up to and including incident commander.

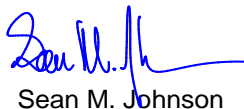
I can personally attest to the dedication and selfless service of these volunteer responders, many of whom are unpaid. They live up to the motto of search and rescue every day in their service to their state and communities, applying their talents so “that others may live”. While we can never fully repay these SAR volunteers for the work they do to find the lost, reunite them with their loved ones, and bring closure to families through the dignified recovery of remains; extending the availability of these special license plates is both an appropriate and fitting recognition for their service.

Search and rescue covers many domains and contains many specialties. The National Search and Rescue plan the addresses aeronautical, water, land (rural), and urban SAR domains. Often these domains work as one in wide area searches and catastrophic search and rescue events. A common denominator is the presence and participation of volunteers, who work seamlessly alongside career and volunteer responders from other disciplines during emergencies.

With this in mind, I respectfully request the committee’s consideration of an amendment to HB 1336. Section 1 defines “Volunteer search and rescue personnel” to include water and dive rescue personnel. While these SAR professionals are very deserving of recognition for their service through special license plates, the language currently excludes many other volunteer SAR professionals who are also very deserving of such consideration. Simply striking the words “includes water and dive rescue personnel and” from page 1 lines 20 and 21 will ensure that this bill not only includes water and dive rescue personnel, but other equally dedicated SAR volunteer professionals.

In closing, I fully support HB 1336 and encourage a do pass recommendation from this committee. Thank you for your consideration.

Very Respectfully,



Sean M. Johnson

Testimony of Travis Bateman, Founder/Director

Badlands Search and Rescue
Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota

In Support of HB 1336

1/15/2023

Chairman Ruby and members of the House Transportation Committee:

I am Travis Bateman, and I am representing Badlands Search and Rescue (Badlands SAR) and the newly formed Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota (SARVAND) testifying in support of HB 1336.

Both organizations are based out of Watford City but there are members across North Dakota and our primary purpose is to assist law enforcement and emergency services in search and rescue incidents of lost, injured, missing, or otherwise distressed persons and return them to a place of safety or to medical care. Badlands Search and Rescue was founded in September 2018 and currently has a membership of 25, with eight being on for two years or longer.

Our team does not receive any government funding. Our members supply all their own gear, vehicles, fuel, hotel, food, and other applicable costs when responding and operating on missions. The organization provides training and certification, some additional equipment, and insurance coverage but we survive solely off donations and sometimes grant funds.

With that, one modification that may be needed with the language of the bill or at least discussed is that pertaining to the license plate numbers as we have members over various counties and therefore ZIP codes. However, if it is to go off where the organization is based, then the language would suffice as it currently is written.

As the founder and director of Badlands SAR and SARVAND I speak in support of this bill to recognize and assist our volunteer members with this recognition by license plate. As stated above, our members pay out of pocket to respond to SAR incidents. To date, those have been as far as Fort Yates, ND and have been as many as four nights worth of hotel and food expenses. We have very dedicated members that will still foot those costs regardless of this bill, but the offset of vehicle registration in addition to the further identification feature the license plates would provide would serve as a thank you from the state for their services and a morale booster that highlights what they are doing is appreciated and doesn't go unseen.

We have members that are preparing to go to training in Mississippi as they purchased their own bloodhound trailing dogs specifically to benefit our team and therein, North Dakota. All at their own expense. Again, what this bill seeks to do would be an excellent aid in helping them throughout each year as they provide these fully volunteer services.

Lastly, this bill came as a surprise to me. I only came across it reviewing what bills were scheduled and open for providing testimony and I was humbled to see that someone had submitted this action. There are many water rescue, dive/rescue, and dive/recovery teams under government agencies in North Dakota and they too work tirelessly, often in volunteer status, and are ever so deserving of what this bill aims to do and provide.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee and express my support for this bill and for your continued commitment to working together to address items like this for North Dakotans but especially those that volunteer to do everything they can in service of their fellow human beings. I urge you to support HB 1336.

On behalf of our members,

Travis F. Bateman

Travis F. Bateman
Founder / Director
Badlands Search and Rescue
Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota

Sean M. Johnson
6405 Preston Loop
Bismarck, ND 58504
(701) 391-5326

Senate Transportation Committee
68th Legislative Assembly
March 2nd, 2023

Testimony in Support of HB 1336

Honorable Members of the North Dakota Senate Transportation Committee:

My name is Sean Johnson, and I testify as a private citizen in support of HB 1336. This bill would extend the availability of special license plates for volunteer first responders to volunteer search and rescue (SAR) professionals. I have been a member of a volunteer search and rescue organization since 1997 and served in several SAR capacities including ground search team member, aircrew search observer, safety officer; and in mission staff capacities up to and including incident commander.

I can personally attest to the dedication and selfless service of these volunteer responders, many of whom are unpaid. They live up to the motto of search and rescue every day in their service to their state and communities, applying their talents so “that others may live”. While we can never fully repay these SAR volunteers for the work they do to find the lost, reunite them with their loved ones, and bring closure to families through the dignified recovery of remains; extending the availability of these special license plates is both an appropriate and fitting recognition for their service.

Search and rescue covers many domains and contains many specialties. The National Search and Rescue plan the addresses aeronautical, water, land (rural), and urban SAR domains. Often these domains work as one in wide area searches and catastrophic search and rescue events. A common denominator is the presence and participation of volunteers, who work seamlessly alongside career and volunteer responders from other disciplines during emergencies.

With this in mind, Section 1 currently defines “Volunteer search and rescue personnel” to *include* water and dive rescue personnel. An amendment had been proposed in the House striking the words “includes water and dive rescue personnel and” from page 1 lines 20 and 21 to clarify that this bill not only includes water and dive rescue personnel, but other equally dedicated SAR volunteer professionals. The House felt the language as written was inclusive of all SAR volunteers. It is my hope your committee also sees it this way, and that such Legislative intent will be made clear to the Department of Transportation if this bill becomes law. If for some reason you feel the bill requires further clarification to ensure all SAR volunteers are included, I would propose the language above for your consideration as an amendment.

In closing, I fully support HB 1336 and encourage a do pass recommendation from this committee. Thank you for your consideration.

Very Respectfully,

Sean M. Johnson

Allen Scheurer
1070 42nd Ave W
West Fargo, ND 58078
701-866-3301

Senate Transportation Committee
68th Legislative Assembly
March 2, 2023

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB 1336

Chairman Clemens and members of the Senate Transportation Committee:

My name is Allen Scheurer, and I am a volunteer member of Valley Water Rescue testifying in support of HB 1336 and its addition of special letter plates for Search and Rescue personal. This bill is amendment to the initiated measure No. 4 passed on November 6, 2018, and recognizes the Search and Rescue (SAR) personal as Emergency Responders.

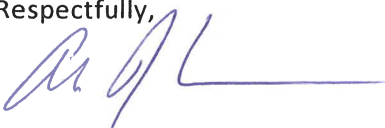
Valley Water Rescue is a public safety non-profit organization that operates SAR activities to support Law Enforcement and Fire Departments throughout North Dakota and local municipalities. Our Public Safety mission includes Dive Rescue, Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV) Sonar, K9 SAR, and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV).

Volunteer Emergency Responder teams like ours are on call 24/7 and require the use of personal vehicles. Scene safety is a top priority, and the Emergency Responder plate allows SAR teams to be easily identifiable to LEO and Fire Rescue teams. I acknowledge the passage of SB 2329 in the 67th Legislative Assembly allowing volunteer SAR to classify personal transportation as a Class C Emergency Vehicles with the use of lights. Our team does not adopt this practice and feel the Emergency Responder Plates would be adequate to address our response and Law Enforcement scene safety needs.

Additionally Volunteer SAR teams provide a necessary public service, and the men and women who perform these duties are typically not compensated and do it because of their sense of community and generous personalities. The Emergency Response plate is a way the public can show appreciation to these individuals. Emergency Response team members are extremely dedicated and spend many hours of training outside their normal jobs for times when they are needed. These Emergency Responder plates are a way for our teams to recruit and retain members, something that is vital to be able to support our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee and I conclude this written testimony in support of HB 1336 and encourage a do pass recommendation.

Respectfully,



Allen Scheurer