



NORTH DAKOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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COMMITTEES:
Appropriations

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HB 1206 – Emergency Services Communications Coordinating Committee Technical Corrections

Chairman Jason Dockter and members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee,

I'm before you today as chairman of our legislative Information Technology Committee, which received 3 policy requests during our most recent interim. By practice we do not recommend legislation to be introduced by the committee; instead we recommend concepts and invite committee members to work on those proposals in subsequent legislative sessions.

HB 1206 is a technical update to 57-40.6 regarding emergency services communication systems and one of the policy concepts your IT Committee unanimously recommended in September 2020.

The Emergency Services Communications Coordinating Committee (ESC3) was established by state law in 2001, specifically to implement technologies that will efficiently and cost-effectively deliver 911 calls to one of the 21 existing public safety answering points (PSAPs).

As you may know, 911-related services are funded from an emergency services system fee levied on telecommunications services in this state. All 53 counties and 1 city impose this fee. We learned at our September 2020 meeting that 35 jurisdictions charge the maximum \$2.00 fee while the remaining 19 counties charge \$1.50.

The telecommunication fee revenue totaled \$17.7 million in 2019, roughly 64% of the \$27.5 million needed to support North Dakota emergency communication systems. Remaining funds are collected primarily from local property taxes.

ESC3 is composed of two state and two local government representatives. State laws are regularly reviewed by ESC3 to ensure code is consistent with common practices and emerging technology utilized by our emergency responders.

Among other technical updates, HB 1206:

- updates terminology to be consistent with the proposed changes;
- require, rather than allow, a county or city to use 911-fees in accordance with ESC3 guidelines;
- require a PSAP to dispatch the quickest emergency medical service as predetermined by the system coordinator, and then dispatch secondary responders based on the best information at the time;
- requires PSAPs to have written policies for establishing dispatch procedures for text-initiated communications;
- removes the requirement for our Bureau of Criminal Investigation to obtain information from wireless providers and to distribute contact information to each PSAP;
- removes outdated language regarding prepaid wireless fee collections;
- allows prepaid wireless sellers to retain 3 percent of prepaid wireless fees revenue

Ultimately, these changes are intended to improve the coordination and function of our emergency service systems. If enacted, language in HB 1206 should also reduce the likelihood of political subdivisions misinterpreting how 911-fee revenue may be used.

Representatives from the Association of Counties and ESC3 will follow with additional information and can answer technical questions you may have. On behalf of your Information Technology Committee, I encourage your favorable recommendation and ultimate passage of HB 1206.

Thank you again, Chairman Dockter and members of the committee.