

**2023 HOUSE POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS**

**HB 1129**

## HB 1129 Summary

**Measure Title:** A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 54-10-14 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to firefighters relief association, rural fire protection district, and rural ambulance service district audit fees; and to provide for retroactive application.

**Date of Introduction:** 01/03/2023

**Primary Sponsor:** Brandenburg, Mike

**Cosponsors:** Grueneich, Jim Erbele, Robert

## History

Date	Chamber	Action	Journal	Measure Version	FN
01/03/2023	H	Introduced, first reading, referred Political Subdivisions Committee	HJ 170	23.0131.01000	FN
01/12/2023	H	Committee Hearing 10:00 - cancelled			
01/12/2023	H	Request return from committee	HJ 251		
01/12/2023	H	Withdrawn from further consideration	HJ 251		

**TESTIMONY**

**HB 1129**

My name is Sean Nordstog and I am a firefighter at the Grand forks Fire Department as well as the Treasurer of the Grand Forks Fire Relief Association.

I would like to ask for your support of House Bill 1129. If this bill is passed, our Association will no longer be required to submit financial statement audits. As a former CPA I would perform financial statement audits and understand the costs associated with them. Even for the smallest Organizations, audits can easily be in excess of \$10,000 a year, which consumes a large portion of an already small operating budget from our Association.

Passing this bill will eliminate burden of large audit costs for the Grand Forks Fire Relief Association, which operates on an already small budget. The bill allows for other reporting requirements from the state auditor which are less in scope than an audit, thus more economical. This will allow us to better perform our mission of supporting retired members and will provide a much healthier pension fund.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sean Nordstog

January 9<sup>th</sup> ,2023

North Dakota House Political Subdivision Committee,

Chairman: Representative Donald W. Longmuir,

Supportive Written Testimony for HB1129,

As a past 10-year Board Member and 5-year board chairman of a rural Killdeer Ambulance District which had a state audit done which was completed in late 2022. The amount of dollars spent was \$48,650.00 payable to our state auditor office and the time which had to be provided to request from the state auditor's department for additional information also impacts end cost. These hours of research for information become hidden cost to the property taxpayers of the district. The time spent by three district employees finding and getting the necessary materials to the State Auditor's department (as per 3 different state individuals placed request which some happened to be the same resource of information's shared earlier) took local employees of the district an estimates 90 hours. You can place what ever value one wishes for these 3 district individuals, but they had to get paid for their time to find and deliver the information as requested.

I do understand the need for the occasional audits and the district patrons needing to find and figure out how their tax dollars are being used to save a life, treat a patient, or assist another emergency service worker in a time of need. The cost charged by our state auditor's department has placed on this type of service/fee seems to be totally out of hand as this department operates from a **fund balance provided by the state** to its operational duties. It appears to me we are seeing some double dipping of tax dollars because of the way this has been handled. Starting at the state level and bring it back to the bill submitted to the local level. If emergency services had high profit levels and the opportunity to over charge was not controlled by insurance companies and federal medial programs which is roughly 50% of our business. I could see the advantage but in our case the cost of the \$48,650 bill from state auditor's office consumed 20% of our 2023 available property tax dollars.

Supporting HB1129 helps solve and keep our local property tax dollars working for our local emergency service districts in our great state.

Dunn County Property Owner and retired County Commissioner,

Daryl Dukart



# WESTERN DAKOTA ENERGY ASSOCIATION

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Trudy Ruland  
President  
Mountrail County

Supt. Leslie Bieber  
Vice President  
Alexander PSD

Zach Gaaskjolen  
City of Stanley

Keith Harris  
Dickinson PSD

Supt. Tim Holte  
Stanley PSD

Shannon Holter  
City of Bowbells

Lyn James  
City of Bowman

Nick Klemisch  
Garrison PSD  
Coal Conversion  
Counties

David Montgomery  
Williams County

Craig Pelton  
Dunn County

John Phillips  
Coal Conversion  
Counties

January 11, 2023

Testimony of:

Geoff Simon, Lobbyist #144  
in support of HB 1129  
House Political Subdivisions Committee

Chairman Longmuir and Committee members:

On behalf of the city, county and school district members of the Western Dakota Energy Association (WDEA), we wish to express support for House Bill 1129 to exempt rural fire and ambulance districts from fees imposed by the state auditor. Recent cases indicate the fees have been excessive, and place a disproportionate burden on rural fire/ ambulance districts, potentially depriving the citizens they serve of essential life-saving emergency medical assistance and protection of their private property.

One example of which I'm aware is a recent audit of the Killdeer Area Ambulance District. Although the district has an annual budget of just over \$1 million, it was assessed fees of nearly \$50,000 for an audit performed by the state auditor's office. That amount doesn't include lost time incurred by district employees who were compelled to spend dozens of hours producing records required to perform the audit, time which could have been put to more productive use.

Rural fire/ambulance districts in sparsely populated areas have meager taxing ability to support operations, so are constantly seeking and applying for various state and federal grants to support the vital emergency services they deliver. Their financial struggles are compounded by the fact that the majority of ambulance trips are provided to seniors and low income citizens, for which Medicaid and Medicare typically reimburse less than half of the actual cost of providing ambulance service.

WDEA urges your strong support of HB 1129, which will allow rural districts to avoid the exorbitant fees associated with the state-mandate biannual audits.

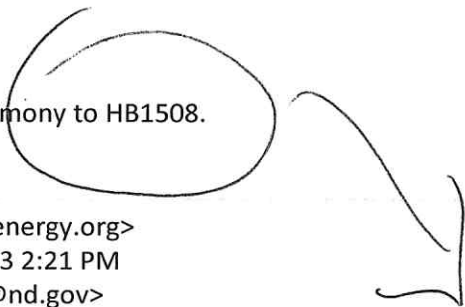
Thank you for your consideration.

**Shimek, DeLores**

---

**From:** Longmuir, Donald  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 19, 2023 3:24 PM  
**To:** Shimek, DeLores; Conley, Richard  
**Subject:** FW: Testimony HB 1129  
**Attachments:** Testimony HB 1129 Final.docx

DeLores/Richard  
Would you please add this testimony to HB1508.  
Thanks!  
don



**From:** Geoff Simon <geoff@ndenergy.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 19, 2023 2:21 PM  
**To:** Don Longmuir <dlongmuir@nd.gov>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Testimony HB 1129

Sent from my iPhone, a petroleum product powered by coal.

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Daryl Dukart <daryldukart@ndsupernet.com>  
**Date:** January 11, 2023 at 6:27:47 PM CST  
**Subject:** FW: Testimony HB 1129

This is the managers of KAAS with her written copy of what she is going to testified tomorrow on. I called her and got permission to share with you. Daryl

**From:** [killdeerems@ndsupernet.com](mailto:killdeerems@ndsupernet.com) <[killdeerems@ndsupernet.com](mailto:killdeerems@ndsupernet.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 11, 2023 11:16 AM  
**To:** [daryldukart@ndsupernet.com](mailto:daryldukart@ndsupernet.com)  
**Subject:** Testimony HB 1129

Written testimony is attached. I hope it is written clearly to be understandable.

--  
Ann Hafner  
Paramedic/Manager  
Killdeer Area Ambulance  
(701)764-6300  
(701)870-5669

IMPORTANT: This electronic transmission contains confidential information, some or all of which may be protected health information as defined by the federal Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule. This transmission is intended for the exclusive use of the individual or entity to whom it is addressed and may contain information that is proprietary, privileged, confidential and/or exempt from disclosure under

applicable law. If you are not the intended recipient (or an employee or agent responsible for delivering this facsimile transmission to the intended recipient), you are hereby notified that any disclosure, dissemination, distribution or copying of this information is strictly prohibited and may be subject to legal restriction or sanction. Please notify the sender by telephone (number listed above) to arrange the return or destruction of the information and all copies.