

**Testimony for SB# 2329**  
**Travis Bateman, Director, Badlands Search & Rescue**

Greetings,

I submit this written testimony to you in support of SB# 2329. This is legislation that was submitted to Senator Patten on behalf of our organization, Badlands Search & Rescue, as well as others that may follow in the future and still others that currently exist today.

Search and rescue (SAR) is a new and upcoming public safety branch in North Dakota. Our organization started in September of 2018 and is both a ground SAR and a water SAR team based out of Watford City/McKenzie County and servicing the rugged Badlands region of North Dakota as well as parts of eastern Montana. Other teams in the state (Lake Region Search & Rescue and a team in Langdon) are geared solely towards water rescue incidents or dive rescue and dive recovery incidents. Some are connected to a government agency such as sheriff or fire department and still others, are private and nongovernmental (Wyoming State Trackers Association and Dakota Search and Rescue, of South Dakota).

The purpose of this bill is to add the titles of this branch of public safety to adequately authorize and safeguard us under the current statute of NDCC 39-01-01 which covers authorized emergency vehicles and grant the proper protection of law. In the current statute however, only three branches of public safety are listed; law enforcement, fire departments, and emergency medical services. Tow trucks and emergency management are also listed.

This results in a lack of direct and necessary coverage for SAR, water rescue, and dive rescue teams and with the passage of Senate Bill 2329, these would be added titles to cover our teams and volunteers under state law with ease and without complexity of new legislation sections or entirely new statutes.

The term "Search" by national SAR standards is "to identify and locate persons who are or may become distressed or injured and are unable to return to a place of safety on their own."

"Rescue" by national SAR standards is defined; "to access, stabilize, and evacuate distressed or injured persons, by whatever means necessary, to ensure their timely transfer to an appropriate care facility or to a familiar environment."

Search and rescue, water rescue, and dive rescue in each of their specific fields and the often austere and hazardous locations where they occur make the incidents an emergency. Add in the factors of weather, medications, the elements, wild animals, mental state, age, terrain, time of year (especially winter), and other factors, it is very much necessary for these additional three titles to be listed in the existing statute and given the full authority of law as well as to

adhere to and maintain all applicable standards already given to law enforcement, fire departments, and emergency medical services as currently written.

In researching other state laws, SAR and water/dive rescue teams are listed and viewed as emergency responders due to the lifesaving and often urgent nature of their calls. Those states researched and their statutes are listed here:

Colorado	42-1-102(6), 42-1-204, 42-4-108(5), 42-4-213, 42-4-222, and 42-4-238.
Montana	61-9-227(1) and 61-9-227 (2)
Idaho	49-124 and 49-910A(2)
Utah	R698-7-3, R698-7-6 and R698-7-7
Minnesota	169.011 and Law 1959, chapter 53
Iowa	2018 Acts, House File 2302. Section 321.1, subsection 62, code 2018.

With that, I conclude this written testimony in support of SB#2329 and I look forward to answering any further questions the legislature or transportation committee members may have in verbal testimony as well on Thursday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Thank you for your time and efforts to this matter.

Respectfully,

Travis Bateman  
Director  
Badlands Search & Rescue