

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

House Transportation Committee  
68<sup>th</sup> 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.

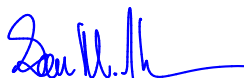
I can personally attest to the dedication and selfless service of these volunteer responders, many of whom are unpaid. They live up to the motto of search and rescue every day in their service to their state and communities, applying their talents so "that others may live". While we can never fully repay 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