

HB1392
Bill Testimony
Rep. Eric J. Murphy
District 43, Grand Forks

Chairman Ruby and the honorable members of the House Transportation Committee. This bill is an old friend with a new twist as it provides for a \$125 fee to operate a motor vehicle with a single, rear license plate. In addition, the fine for operating a motor vehicle registered in North Dakota without paying this fee and with only a single license plate results in a fine of \$200. This is a 10-fold increase in the fine and intended to drive compliance.

A change is made in NDCC 39-04-08 to charge a fee of \$125 for registration of a motor vehicle with a single plate. When drafting this bill, it was intended that this is a yearly fee paid upon yearly vehicle registration. As such, I propose modifying the language on page one, line fourteen to "yearly fee".

As noted by ND DOT, they estimate that 50% of the 16,000 higher end vehicles will be registered to use a single plate and an additional 1% of the remaining 744,967 registered vehicles will use this option. Hence, the supposition is that this fee is well tolerated by individuals who own a higher end vehicle designed to not have a front license plate.

The fiscal note is very positive with an estimated revenue of \$1,931,209 in the first year with the current language and this more than likely would be similar in year 2 of the biennium if the wording is changed to "yearly fee" as suggested. These funds would go into the Highway Tax Distribution Fund and be distributed to counties (22%), cities (12.5%), townships (2.7%), public transportation (1.5%) and to the State Highway fund (61.3%).

The costs are estimated to be less than \$5,000.

To encourage compliance with the change in 39-04-08, the fee (fine) for operating a motor vehicle with only one plate without this additional fee is \$200 and this modification is made in 39-04-11.

The strategy in this bill should reduce the angst of North Dakota law enforcement and of gas station owners with regards to motor vehicles displaying a single license plate. Simply, the likelihood that someone using a single plate on a higher end motor vehicle would drive away without paying for gasoline is extremely unexpected and low.

In the end, this is a bill that gives owners of higher end vehicles an option for registering their vehicles to operate with a single plate, reduces the angst of law enforcement and gas station owners, while providing the motoring public with something that they want and will pay for, all while providing a significant amount of new revenue that will be used to improve highway infrastructure across political subdivisions and at the state level. Simply, solve a long-term issue and provide a new source of revenue. That is a win! I stand for questions.