

January 30, 2025

David Uhlich

Watford City Fire Chief

Chairman Patten and members of the Committee

Thank you for your time this morning as I speak in support of SB-2340. My name is David Uhlich, Watford City fire Chief. I have been a volunteer firefighter since November 2001, serving as Chief since 2018.

During my time as a firefighter and especially the last few years as the chief I have seen multiple large scale incidents. Being an all volunteer department I have seen the struggles that are thrown on many departments during these emergencies. We are all trained and prepared for them , but the real issue emerges when they become a prolonged event. During the initial attack we rely on neighboring departments for support and additional resources, but as the incident grows or the longer it continues it is sometimes difficult to continue to fight as effectively as when we first arrived. We also sometimes run into an incident where we may not have all the needed equipment and training to mitigate the emergency situation.

With such a large portion of the firefighters in North Dakota being volunteers, I feel this is our chance to improve support and assist them on this complex incidents.

I feel that all fire departments are willing to work together and we know that our environment and jobs will forever be changing. With your support I feel we can make all of our emergency responses better and more effective.

With SB-2340, I feel we can find a way to better response from other departments after we have used our mutual aid partners. As we learned last fall, when the departments you normally call on are busy you have to reach out even further. Making backfilling and being able to cover the other calls easier. A regional response group that can work together and train together for better response may also be possible. Setting up regional groups could also allow for team meetings and planning, so we know what resources and staffing we would have available if needed.

Sincerely,



David Uhlich WCFD Chief