

**2021 HOUSE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**HB 1146**

# 2021 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Government and Veterans Affairs Committee Pioneer Room, State Capitol

HB 1146  
1/22/2021

Relating to rulemaking authority of the statewide interoperability executive committee and eligibility for statewide interoperable radio network access

**Vice Chairman B. Koppelman** opened the hearing at 8:33 AM.

Representatives	Roll Call
Representative Jim Kasper	P
Representative Ben Koppelman	P
Representative Pamela Anderson	P
Representative Jeff A. Hoverson	P
Representative Karen Karls	P
Representative Scott Louser	P
Representative Jeffery J. Magrum	P
Representative Mitch Ostlie	P
Representative Karen M. Rohr	P
Representative Austen Schauer	P
Representative Mary Schneider	P
Representative Vicky Steiner	P
Representative Greg Stemen	P
Representative Steve Vetter	P

### Discussion Topics:

- Clarification on providing radio grants
- Users eligible to receive the grant
- The Statewide interoperable executive committee ability to draft rules
- Support of First Responder agencies

**Rep. Bosch** introduced the bill and testified in favor.

**Duane Schell**, Chief Information Officer, NDIT, testified in favor with testimony #2204.

**Ryan Riesinger**, Vice President, Airport Association of ND, in favor testimony #2190.

**Donnell Preskey**, Public Relations Specialist, NDACo, in favor with testimony #2182.

**Dustin Theurer**, Interim Fire Chief, Bismarck Rural Fire Dept.in favor with testimony #2222

**Jennifer Witchmen**, Resident of ND. #2229

**Rep. Stemen** moved to amend to add Emergency Clause. Seconded by **Rep. Vetter**  
Voice Vote: Motion carried.

**Rep. Rohr**: Motion for Do Pass as amended. Seconded by **Rep. Schauer**.

Roll Call Vote:

<b>Representatives</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Representative Jim Kasper	Y
Representative Ben Koppelman	Y
Representative Pamela Anderson	Y
Representative Jeff A. Hoverson	Y
Representative Karen Karls	Y
Representative Scott Louser	Y
Representative Jeffery J. Magrum	Y
Representative Mitch Ostlie	Y
Representative Karen M. Rohr	Y
Representative Austen Schauer	Y
Representative Mary Schneider	Y
Representative Vicky Steiner	Y
Representative Greg Stemen	Y
Representative Steve Vetter	Y

Motion carried. 14-0-0.

**Additional written testimony:** #2167

**Vice Chairman B. Koppelman** closed the hearing at 9:18 AM.

*Carmen Hart, Committee Clerk by Donna Whetham*

January 22, 2021

DE 1/22/21  
/otl

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1146

Page 1, line 4, after "access" insert "; and to declare an emergency"

Page 2, after line 4, insert:

**"SECTION 3. EMERGENCY.** This Act is declared to be an emergency measure."

Renumber accordingly

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**HB 1146: Government and Veterans Affairs Committee (Rep. Kasper, Chairman)**  
recommends **AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS** and when so amended, recommends  
**DO PASS** (14 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1146 was placed  
on the Sixth order on the calendar.

Page 1, line 4, after "access" insert "; and to declare an emergency"

Page 2, after line 4, insert:

**"SECTION 3. EMERGENCY.** This Act is declared to be an emergency  
measure."

Renumber accordingly

HB 1146 TESTIMONY - SUPPORT  
HOUSE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS  
BY: DUANE SCHELL, CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER  
ND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
JANUARY 22, 2021

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Duane Schell. I am the Chief Technology Officer with North Dakota Information Technology (NDIT). In addition, I represent the Chief Information Officer on the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) and I am currently serving as the chair of that committee. I am here to express support for House Bill 1146.

This bill provides for what I believe unintended consequences in legislation passed during the last legislative session. Specifically, HB 1453 of the 66<sup>th</sup> legislative assembly provided funding, a funding formula and authority to proceed with the Statewide Interoperable Radio Network (SIRN) project. This project, which is estimated to take five years to complete, will provide a single, statewide, mission critical communications solution that will meet the rigorous needs and standards of the public safety community. I am pleased to tell you that this project is well on its way to meeting this goal.

The primary objective of this bill is to adjust the language regarding the scope of who is eligible for the \$1500 cost share relating to each radio that can access the network. The current language limits this cost share to county and city jurisdictions and excludes the large and critical volunteer community as they do not fall under the definition of a county or city within NDCC. The volunteer ambulance and volunteer fire districts are critical to providing public safety services and response to the rural areas of our state and are some of the most financially constrained members of the public safety community. By changing the language to “a political subdivision” we remove this limitation. I will also add that there is no fiscal note associated with this bill as the funding strategy provided last session did include this stakeholder group.

This concludes my prepared remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions.



# Airport Association of North Dakota

**Matthew Remyse - President   Ryan Riesinger - Vice President**

**Jordan Dahl - Sec. / Treasurer**

P.O. Box 2845, Fargo, North Dakota 58108-2845

(701) 355-1808

January 22, 2021

**RE: Testimony to Government & Veterans Affairs Committee on HB 1146 – Statewide Interoperable Radio Network Amend & Reenact**

Chairman Kasper and members of the committee,

I am Ryan Riesinger, Vice-President of the Airport Association of North Dakota (AAND) and Executive Director of the Grand Forks Regional Airport Authority (GFK). I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. AAND is the professional organization for North Dakota Airports and it serves to promote airports, aviation, and safety across the state. I am here today on behalf of AAND and GFK to express our support of the amendments and reenactment of HB 1146.

The State of North Dakota and its emergency service agencies are very fortunate to be moving towards a new, state of the art, interoperable radio network. This new system will dramatically improve communications and safety for all users in the near future. In the last Legislative Session, a bill was passed to provide a State cost share of \$1,500.00 per radio to Cities and Counties to transition to the new system. While the cost share is very helpful, unfortunately the language specifying Cities and Counties limits many emergency service responders, including non-governmental medical/ambulance services, township/volunteer fire departments, and Airports from participating in the cost share.

North Dakota commercial service airports have emergency services for fire, medical, law enforcement, and security response on airport properties. The airport emergency services may be part of the local city government or provided separately by a political subdivision within the state, often operated by an Airport Authority. The airport emergency services require statewide

interoperable radio network communications with public safety answering points, fire, medical, and law enforcement for mutual aid coordination and response, on and off airport property. The State cost share opportunity from the information technology department is critical to all North Dakota emergency services providers to support the acquisition of the new radio communication equipment needed to access the statewide interoperable radio network. The amended language in HB 1146 will effectively allow for all providers to participate in the radio cost share.

In closing, AAND and its members are supportive of HB 1146 as amended. We respectfully request that the committee provide a do pass on HB 1146. I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today and I will take any questions the committee may have for me.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan R', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ryan Riesinger  
Vice-President, Airport Association of North Dakota  
Executive Director, Grand Forks Regional Airport Authority



Testimony Prepared for the  
**House GVA**  
January 22, 2021  
Donnell Preskey, NDACo



**RE: Supportive Testimony for HB 1146 – SIRN**

Chair Kasper and committee members, I'm Donnell Preskey with North Dakota Association of Counties. We stand in support of the HB 1146.

I serve as the NDACo representative on the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC). This committee has been incredibly busy and focused since last session on efforts to get the SIRN project going. And there has been tremendous progress.

As we were working on the radio reimbursement element, it came to our attention that entities such as fire and ambulance districts would not be eligible for the state cost share for the radios due to language in the 2019 SIRN bill (HB 1435). That bill provides a \$1500 cost share for hand-held and mobile radios. It was the opinion the language only allowed city and county law enforcement, fire fighters and emergency medical personnel to be eligible.

From my involvement with the SIRN bill in 2019 and providing testimony to this committee and others, I know that was not the intention as a supporter. And based on my discussions with legislators then and now, it was not the legislature's intent either. We need to correct this, as our volunteer fire and ambulances are entities that need this cost share the most.

The language we are asking you to support will open the cost-share eligibility to those tied to a political subdivision or a nongovernmental emergency services provider operating in the state. This language will allow for fire districts, ambulance districts, emergency managers, highway engineers, public works, schools eligible for the cost-share.

There is no additional cost, the radios this bill addresses, were figured into the formula used as we approached the legislature to provide a cost-share. I would be remiss if I didn't say, the cost of the radios is greater than estimated two years ago, as a federal law requires law enforcement to have encrypted radios. However, we recognize the commitment the state has already made for this project.

What this bill will provide, is the ability for **all** our responders to receive state funds for a portion of their radios which will increase participation and ultimately, closing the gap between our responders so they can have the interoperability that we as a state are pursuing.

House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee  
House Bill 1146  
By Dustin L. Theurer  
January 22, 2021

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Dustin Theurer, Interim Fire Chief of the Bismarck Rural Fire Department.

I am requesting your support of House Bill 1146, in particular that political subdivisions be able to receive the rebate for radios needed as the new radio system is being provided across the state for emergency agencies. This new language allows fire protection districts to now be included.

Communication is an essential function of fire protection districts and keeps everyone safe on the fire ground.

There is one area of concern in relation to House Bill 1146 that I would like to address, which is the dollar amount of the rebate. Small fire departments desiring to migrate onto the SIRN system will have to purchase radios as the new radio system is being implemented state wide. Without the rebate, the affected departments will have to purchase these radios out of their normal budget, which could have a drastic impact on the budget. Having to spend money on radios could delay them being able to purchase a needed piece of apparatus or proper gear to keep them safe when they are called to emergency situations.

As mentioned above, having good reliable radios for communication keeps both emergency personnel and the public safe. Based on data received, the approximate value the radios that these departments will purchase will start at approximately \$1,800 for a handheld radio and \$2,200 for a vehicle radio. This price reflects the cost of a very basic radio and may not include other essential items. For example a noise canceling lapel microphone can cost up to \$400.00 each. As this is something that they will need to have the fire departments serving North Dakota would appreciate consideration for increasing the reimbursement amount to help all agencies with these additional costs.

Thank you for your consideration in allowing rural fire protection districts to be included in the radio rebate and also considering the radio rebate amount to be increased to \$2,500.00 per radio with House Bill 1146. I am available for any questions that you may have.

## HOUSE BILL NO. 1146

### Ward County Emergency Management Talking Points

- SECTION 2. AMENDMENT
  - Section 37-17.3-03
    - 1.
      - We support the language change in this bill for the following reasons:
        - Not all first responder agencies that will utilize the new SIRN radio system are governed by county/city jurisdictions.
          - Ex: Fire Protection Districts, Private Ambulance, etc.
            - Fire Protection Districts: Roughly 78%  
Percentage of the state
              - FD's in 2019:
                - 366 Total
                - 281 Fire Protection Districts
                - 83 Departments
                - 344 Volunteer  
Departments/Districts
                - 13 Combination  
Departments/Districts
                - 7 Career Departments/Districts
      - The amended bill will support first responder agencies such as Fire Protection Districts, which represent 78% of the fire protection for the state of North Dakota.
    - 2.
      - The current reimbursement per radio, despite the type, is \$1,500. We would recommend a change to the language to increase this amount to \$2,500 per radio.
        - The cheapest option for radios are as follows:
          - Handheld Non-Encrypted - \$1800-\$4700
          - Handheld Encrypted - \$4000-\$5500
          - Mobile Non-Encrypted - \$2100-\$4800
          - Mobile Encrypted - \$4300-5600
        - This does not allow smaller fire departments/fire protection districts to utilize the SIRN radio system due to budget constraints.
          - Examples
            - Fire Protection District 1:
              - Budget: \$4000
              - Radio Replacement Cost: \$28000
                - Not including costs to program radio

Communication is the number one failure in any incident or disaster. By not creating the opportunity for all agencies to utilize such an important communication system, we are setting them up for failure.

Testimony to the  
House Government and Veteran's Affairs Committee  
January 22, 2021  
Regarding House Bill 1146

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am Lynn Brackel, chairman of the Bowman County Commission, and a member of the ND County Commissioners Association Legislative Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of funding for the radio equipment necessary to communicate on the new SIRN network.

I am testifying today to speak about the communication needs of emergency services in counties like Bowman and the 12 other counties that border South Dakota and Montana and therefore have increased needs for radio communications.

We certainly support the intent of HB 1146—to restore the original anticipated cost-share on radios for the many volunteer ambulance and fire responders, as well as public works and emergency managers. However, we believe that the authorized state cost-share structure is insufficient—particularly in counties like Bowman.

Our responders MUST have dual-band radios as we regularly must communicate and coordinate with responders from South Dakota and Montana. This was obvious very recently with a wildfire in Adams County and South Dakota with 40 mph winds. There were 13 Fire Departments from South Dakota and 10 Fire Departments from North Dakota. Bowman had 3 fire trucks and 8 men working the fire. (See Attachment of the Lemmon Fire Dept. press release)

Below is a history of past shared incidents with adjoining states:

- National Grasslands fire 2015 south of Hettinger in SD. National Forest Service set a control burn and lost control and burned 12,000 acres of grasslands. Responders: Hettinger, Reeder and SD Lemmon, Bison and Lodgepole.
- Bucyrus grass fire 2012 on the border of SD. Burned 3 houses and 3-4,000 acres of grass and cropland. Total amount of damages is \$3 million.
- Deep Creek Fire 2004 west of Amidon in the badlands burned 10,000 acres.
- Long Pines National Forest fire which occurred west of Camp Crook, SD and Mill Iron, Montana.

This cross-border coordination is not a rare occurrence, but a day-to-day and week-to-week reality. I am talking about this because the current and proposed state reimbursement is limited to \$1,500. An adequate dual-band radio, which ALL responders will need, has a price of \$5,000 or more. With the state \$1,500 subtracted from the \$5,000 leaves the two counties a cost of \$3,500.

Within Bowman and Slope Counties, we estimate that our responders collectively operate 400 mobile and handheld radios. At \$3,500/radio this calculates to \$1.4 million in tax dollars, which is simply unaffordable for the two counties, our small cities, and particularly the rural fire and EMS districts.

The two counties (Bowman and Slope) share 8 communication towers to get the needed coverage of the radios. Motorola is guaranteeing an 85% handheld and 95% mobile coverage to each region in the state. The two counties and the Association is requesting at least a 90% coverage guarantee in all counties before such a system can be fully implemented. This 90% coverage is necessary for the entire western part of the state because of the terrain in western North Dakota.

Mr. Chairman and committee members, to be clear, I support expanding the state cost-share to all necessary responding agencies, because of the history, coverage and cost of dual band radios. I am asking for your consideration of an increase to the allowable reimbursement in order to maintain a safe environment of the residents of southwest North Dakota and the adjoining states.



P.O. Box 599  
Lemmon, SD 57638  
Routine Business: 605-374-5796  
FIRE: 911

Fire Chief: Chad Baumgarten  
Asst. Fire Chief: Brent Dirk  
Secretary/Treas.: Matthew Barnes  
Fire Marshal: Shane Penfield  
Training Officer: Neal Pinnow

**\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\***

Contact Information

Shane Penfield, Fire Marshal/Public Information Officer: 605-920-3003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Incident Location

Ten Miles Northwest of Lemmon, South Dakota  
Adams County, North Dakota

Incident Date and Time

January 14, 2021  
4:33 pm

Incident Name: Windy Fire

Time of Release: 3:39 am

Responding Fire Departments:

South Dakota: Lemmon, Bison, McIntosh, Grand River, Morristown, Lodgepole, Meadow, McLaughlin, Isabel, Mobridge, Faith, Prairie City, Ludlow  
North Dakota: Hettinger, Bowman, Flasher, Carson, Elgin, New Leipzig, Mott, Regent, Reeder, Scranton

Incident

On January 14, 2021 at 4:33 pm, the Lemmon Fire Department responded to a report of a major grass fire northwest of Lemmon in Adams County, North Dakota. At the time of the call winds at the Lemmon Municipal Airport were in excess of 30 to 40 miles per hour, sustained winds, with a high gust of 56 recorded on Thursday. Lemmon Fire immediately requested mutual aid from Hettinger, North Dakota and an initial attack was made. Upon arrival, a very pronounced smoke column was witnessed by fire personnel. The head of the fire had fire lengths upwards of 20 to 30 feet and contained extreme heated gas and smoke. The fire was moving rapidly to the southeast. An ominous orange glow in the west was seen from the City of Lemmon during the early hours of the fire. Several farms and ranches were evacuated and structure protection initiated by the responding fire departments. Nearly twenty area fire departments responded from as far away as Mobridge, South Dakota 100 miles to the east, Bowman, North Dakota 65 miles to the west and Faith, South Dakota 70 miles south and Flasher, North Dakota 80 miles to the northeast. In

addition to fire departments, several other agencies assisted including the Perkins County Sheriff's Office, Lemmon Ambulance, South Dakota Highway Patrol, Ziebach County Sheriff's Office, BIA Fire, Perkins County Highway Department, North Dakota Forestry and several individuals hauling water and plowing fire brakes. At the time of the fire the Lemmon area had been experiencing extremely dry conditions with no snow and under a High Wind Warning issued from the National Weather Service in Rapid City.

The Lemmon Fire Department responded with nine fire apparatus and nearly forty personnel. At the time of this release the extent of mutual aid is only known as "massive" and more specifics will be provided at a later time. Staging areas were designated at Lemmon and Shadehill where water resources from the several departments were organized.

At the time of this release a precise acreage has not been established but the fire traveled over twenty miles and was at some points over four miles wide. The fire's southerly progression was stopped at the Grand River at 11:04 pm, twelve miles south of Lemmon Thursday evening. At 1:38 am, while winds continued gusting at 47 miles per hour and humidity at 68% the west flank of the fire reignited, and crews continue to work at the time of this release to contain the fire.

The fire rapidly progressed through approximately 19 occupied farms and ranches and burned over an estimated unconfirmed 10,000 acres. At the time of this release no occupied residential structures were lost. Unfortunately a ranch headquarters experienced extensive damage. During the incident the Perkins County Sheriff's Office closed both U.S. Highway 12 west of Lemmon South Dakota and Highway 73 south, as crews battled the blaze.

Two injuries were reported and both firefighters received medical attention at the West River Regional Medical Center.

At the time of this release crews continue to monitor and extinguish the multi-mile long fire scene and expect to be on the scene until winds subside and the fire is completely extinguished sometime Friday.

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**2021 SENATE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**HB 1146**

# 2021 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Government and Veterans Affairs Committee  
Room JW216, State Capitol

HB 1146  
3/4/2021

**A BILL relating to rulemaking authority of the statewide interoperability executive committee and eligibility for statewide interoperable radio network access; and to declare an emergency.**

**Chair Vedaa** opened the hearing at 9:00 AM with Sen Vedaa, Meyer, Elkin, K Roers, Weber, Wobbema, and Marcellais present.

## Discussion Topics:

- Technical correction
- Additional groups access

**Rep Glenn Bosch, Dist 30** introduced the bill #7414

**Duane Schell, ND ITD** testified in favor #7381

**Donnell Preskey – ND Association of Counties** - testified in favor #7368

**Bill Kalanek, EMS Assoc** – testified in favor

**Ryan Riesinger, Grand Forks Airport Authority** – testified via Zoom in favor #7334

**Sen Roers moved Do Pass**

**Sen Weber seconded**

**Roll Call vote 7 -- YES 0 -- NO -0-ab Motion carries**

Senators	Vote
Senator Shawn Vedaa	Y
Senator Scott Meyer	Y
Senator Jay R. Elkin	Y
Senator Richard Marcellais	Y
Senator Kristin Roers	Y
Senator Mark F. Webber	Y
Senator Michael A. Wobbema	Y

**Sen Elkin will carry the bill**

**Additional written testimony:**

**Becky Ault - support #7084**

**Blake Crosby - support #7071**

Adjourned at 9:25 AM

*Pam Dever, Committee Clerk*

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**HB 1146, as engrossed: Government and Veterans Affairs Committee (Sen. Vedaa, Chairman)** recommends **DO PASS** (7 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). Engrossed HB 1146 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.

## HB-1146 Introduction

Chairman Vedaa, Members of the Senate GVA Committee. For the record, I'm Glenn Bosch representing Bismarck's district 30.

Last session we passed HB-1435. That bill provided the implementation, governance, and appropriation for the deployment of the new Statewide Interoperable Radio Network (SIRN) and I want to thank this committee for supporting that bill.

The bill before you provides clarification to the portion of the original bill that provided for a radio grant.

HB-1435 made available a \$1500 per radio grant to city and county personal to defray some of the cost of new radio purchases. The grant was also intended to extend to rural and volunteer fire and ambulance districts among others.

What was discovered over the interim is as the bill reads, it unintentionally omits any users of the network that are not city or county personal from receiving the grant. As the bill sponsor, I can tell you that this was not the intention.

The proposed new language captures all the user's that should be eligible to receive the grant and there is no additional cost to the project as these users were always part of the funding calculation.

Lastly, to avoid this situation in the future, language was added that allows SIEC to draft rules regarding eligibility for access to the network.

With that I'll stand for questions.

HB 1146 TESTIMONY - SUPPORT  
SENATE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS  
BY: DUANE SCHELL, CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER  
ND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
MARCH 04, 2021

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Duane Schell. I am the Chief Technology Officer with North Dakota Information Technology (NDIT). In addition, I represent the Chief Information Officer on the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) and I am currently serving as the chair of that committee. I am here to express support for House Bill 1146.

This bill provides for what I believe unintended consequences in legislation passed during the last legislative session. Specifically, HB 1453 of the 66<sup>th</sup> legislative assembly provided funding, a funding formula and authority to proceed with the Statewide Interoperable Radio Network (SIRN) project. This project, which is estimated to take five years to complete, will provide a single, statewide, mission critical communications solution that will meet the rigorous needs and standards of the public safety community. I am pleased to tell you that this project is well on its way to meeting this goal.

The primary objective of this bill is to adjust the language regarding the scope of who is eligible for the \$1500 cost share relating to each radio that can access the network. The current language limits this cost share to county and city jurisdictions and excludes the large and critical volunteer community as they do not fall under the definition of a county or city within NDCC. The volunteer ambulance and volunteer fire districts are critical to providing public safety services and response to the rural areas of our state and are some of the most financially constrained members of the public safety community. By changing the language to “a political subdivision” we remove this limitation. I will also add that there is no fiscal note associated with this bill as the funding strategy provided last session did include this stakeholder group.

This concludes my prepared remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Testimony Prepared for the  
**Senate GVA**  
March 3, 2021  
Donnell Preskey, NDACo



**RE: Supportive Testimony for HB 1146 – SIRN**

Chair Vedaa and committee members, I'm Donnell Preskey with North Dakota Association of Counties. We stand in support of the HB 1146.

I serve as the NDACo representative on the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC). This committee has been incredibly busy and focused since last session on efforts to get the SIRN project going. And there has been tremendous progress.

As we were working on the radio reimbursement element, it came to our attention that entities such as fire and ambulance districts would not be eligible for the state cost share for the radios due to language in the 2019 SIRN bill (HB 1435). That bill provides a \$1500 cost share for hand-held and mobile radios. It was the opinion the language only allowed city and county law enforcement, fire fighters and emergency medical personnel to be eligible.

From my involvement with the SIRN bill in 2019 and providing testimony to this committee and others, I know that from a supporters perspective it was not the intention to leave out those entities. And based on my discussions with legislators then and now, it was not the legislature's intent either. We need to correct this, as those volunteer fire and ambulances are entities that need this cost share the most.

The language we are asking you to support will open the cost-share eligibility to those tied to a political subdivision or a nongovernmental emergency services provider operating in the state. This language will allow for fire districts, ambulance districts, emergency managers, highway engineers, public works, schools eligible for the cost-share.

There is no additional cost, the radios this bill addresses, were included in the formula used in the 2019 legislation. I would be remiss if I didn't say, the cost of the radios is greater than estimated two years ago, as a federal law requires law enforcement to have encrypted radios. However, we recognize the commitment the state has already made for this project.

What this bill will provide, is the ability for **all** our responders to receive state funds for a portion of their radios which will increase participation and ultimately, closing the gap between our responders so they can have the interoperability that we as a state are pursuing.



# Airport Association of North Dakota

**Matthew Remyse - President   Ryan Riesinger - Vice President**

**Jordan Dahl - Sec. / Treasurer**

P.O. Box 2845, Fargo, North Dakota 58108-2845

(701) 355-1808

March 4, 2021

**RE: Testimony to Government & Veterans Affairs Committee on HB 1146 – Statewide Interoperable Radio Network Amend & Reenact**

Chairman Vedaa and members of the committee,

I am Ryan Riesinger, Vice-President of the Airport Association of North Dakota (AAND) and Executive Director of the Grand Forks Regional Airport Authority (GFK). I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. AAND is the professional organization for North Dakota Airports and it serves to promote airports, aviation, and safety across the state. I am here today on behalf of AAND and GFK to express our support of the amendments and reenactment of HB 1146.

The State of North Dakota and its emergency service agencies are very fortunate to be moving towards a new, state of the art, interoperable radio network. This new system will dramatically improve communications and safety for all users in the near future. In the last Legislative Session, a bill was passed to provide a State cost share of \$1,500.00 per radio to Cities and Counties to transition to the new system. While the cost share is very helpful, unfortunately the language specifying Cities and Counties limits many emergency service responders, including non-governmental medical/ambulance services, township/volunteer fire departments, and Airports from participating in the cost share.

North Dakota commercial service airports have emergency services for fire, medical, law enforcement, and security response on airport properties. The airport emergency services may be part of the local city government or provided separately by a political subdivision within the state, often operated by an Airport Authority. The airport emergency services require statewide

interoperable radio network communications with public safety answering points, fire, medical, and law enforcement for mutual aid coordination and response, on and off airport property. The State cost share opportunity from the information technology department is critical to all North Dakota emergency services providers to support the acquisition of the new radio communication equipment needed to access the statewide interoperable radio network. The amended language in HB 1146 will effectively allow for all providers to participate in the radio cost share.

In closing, AAND and its members are supportive of HB 1146 as amended. We respectfully request that the committee provide a do pass on HB 1146. I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today and greatly appreciate your assistance.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan R', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ryan Riesinger  
Vice-President, Airport Association of North Dakota  
Executive Director, Grand Forks Regional Airport Authority



March 4, 2021  
Senate Government and Veteran Affairs  
Honorable Chairman Shawn Vedaa

HB 1146  
SUPPORT

Chairman Vedaa and members of the Government and Veteran Affairs Committee, for the record my name is Becky Ault, Director of the Grand Forks Public Safety Answering Point, and Co-Chair of the ND 911 Association Legislative Committee. I also chair the SIEC Subcommittee working on SIREN initiatives. I urge support of HB1146, which is a bill to amend century code relating to rulemaking authority of the statewide interoperability executive committee and eligibility for statewide interoperable radio network access.

Our 911 Association has been working diligently with our partners at the state and local levels on advancing the very important interoperability SIREN initiatives. A very big component of the success of this project is to continue to bring responders on the system for true interoperability and vast improvement in our communication capabilities, and ability to talk to each other.

This bill will remedy what I believe are unintended consequences in legislation passed in the last session, which inadvertently left out the eligibility for the \$1500 cost share for many of our rural responders.

There is no fiscal note associated with this bill as the funding was already allocated in the last session.

We urge your support of this bill. Thank you for all your assistance and support in updating our outdated legacy radio systems and infrastructure and vastly improving response communications for our responders in the field.



March 4, 2021  
Senate Government and Veterans Affairs  
Chairman Shawn Vedaa  
HB 1146

Chairman Vedaa and members of the committee. For the record, Blake Crosby, Executive Director, North Dakota League of Cities. For full disclosure, I am also the NDLC representative on the Statewide Interoperability Committee (SEIC).

As SEIC reviewed HB 1435, passed in 2019, to provide a \$1500 cost-share for handheld and mobile it was discovered that the bill inadvertently did not allow fire and ambulance districts personnel to be eligible for the cost-share. This was not the intent of the bill or the legislature either and this bill would correct that oversight. As most fire and ambulance districts are volunteer based, they especially need the cost share.

Radios for those per entities were already figured into the cost share formula so there is no additional cost other than costs related to federal law that requires encrypted radios.

This bill will make sure all our responders can receive funding for a portion of their radio costs as we work to have a robust state interoperability radio network.

I ask for your DO-PASS on HB 1146. Thank you for your time and consideration.