

2009 HOUSE POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

HB 1055

## 2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. HB 1055

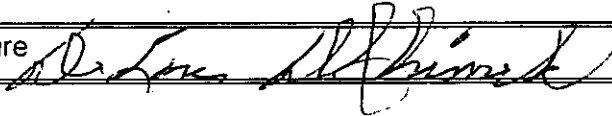
House Political Subdivisions Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: January 8, 2009

Recorder Job Number: 6695

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

**Chairman Wrangham** opened the hearing on HB 1055.

**Roxanne Woeste:** Legislative Counsel explained the bill. This bill would recommend that a task force be provided to provide a cross discipline regional training to supplement federal training dollars. This bill would provide \$400,000 general appropriations to the adjutant general for the purpose of providing grants for regional cross-discipline and cross jurisdictional training and exercising activities for fire departments, law enforcement, emergency medical services, and public communication dispatchers, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2009 and ending June 30, 2011.

**Rep. Zaiser:** Was this included in the Adjutant General's budget?

**Roxanne:** No it was not in the Executive budget.

**Rep. Klemin:** Is there a federal match? Is it firemen funding.

**Roxanne:** I believe representatives from the department will discuss this further.

**Dave Sprynczynatyk:** Adjutant General and I am director of emergency services for the city and that is why I was involved to chair the taskforce. Just reiterated what I said earlier the Public Safety Commission created the task force. Tomorrow I will provide you with a copy of a letter the committee received from the City Council requesting that

task force be created to address the future of emergency services in the state. It was not funded in the budget and again it was simply due to priorities that were established within the agency in order to insure that the agency included which is the state radio and emergency services. In this instance this is one of 15 or so recommendations made by the task force as a whole.

Rep. Koppelman: Brought out a discussion that the federal government tends to start programs and provide funding to jump start them and then the money goes away. Now cities, counties and the state gets into a position to say you are cutting back. We are in the same thing with homeland security and cuts come down. What do we do in this state; we maybe at a very crossroads in ND because we have a surplus so we fund everything including what the federal government has given us and then taken the money away from. Especially things that have been in the budget. What are your thoughts?

Dave Sprynczynatyk: Whenever there is an initiative of any sort question has to be asked, is it sustainable and depending on how it is funded, it can pull challenges at the state or local level. Our resources are limited and we have in emergency services and first response we have at least 54 and 7 entities in the state, 53 counties, 4 tribal nations and 2 cities as well that have individual capabilities and resources available to address first responders within their jurisdictions and was the task force was discussing keeping these emergency services it was important to try to recognize the regional capabilities because a particular jurisdiction does not always have what it needs to address response. The task force was trying wanted to look at encouraging and building regional relationships and regional exercises in advance of any particular actual event whether man made or natural. Your questions is valid on how do you

sustain those relationships you have built and lines of communications you have created and so on. I do not have an answer for that. I would like to think that this would open the door themselves and would help to provide for the further and maybe once that door is open you don't need the same level of funding to carry on that communication. There is no easy answer.

Rep. Conrad: These things were reviewed by the task force and they said these were their priorities and they presented them to committee and the interim committee is recommending them to us.

Dave Sprynczynatyk: Yes that is correct. The task force did this over the course of about 12 months. We broke out into 4 or 5 sub committees and some people were on two different subcommittees and each looked at the particular area of interest and expertise and not all the recommendations that were made by those individual subcommittees of the task force were put forth. There were 15 recommendations made to the Public Safety Committee and asked the Legislative Counsel for help for the session.

Greg Wilz: Deputy Director, Department of Emergency Services: (See testimony #1). Departments train by themselves all the time. We can use homeland security dollars to do these large exercises geared to terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. This is a very important thing to have the neighboring fire departments, police departments and ambulance services training together. There are no dollars and we use to have them. This bill fills that gap and what we intend to do is provide that money out to the 4 regions that we have in the state. They determine how best to spend this money regionally. We use to provide \$50,000 a year per region for 2 years.

**Rep. Klemin:** Doesn't there have to be an application for a grant for a specific purpose; however in your testimony you talked about funneling the money out of the regional and letting them decide so that seems to be different than you said earlier.

**Greg Wilz:** The regional language was used so we could use it as a grant rather than just handing out the dollars is within the state of ND we have done a lot of work and we do have four regions within the state of ND. We have a government structure set up from Homeland security dollars. We don't provide a lot of direct grants to local jurisdictions such as counties and cities. It goes to the regional government structures and within the regional government structures they decide how that money is used and needed within the region. We think this could happen the same way. We would take those dollars and pull them into that regional government structure and let the regions decide how to fund these things.

**Rep. Klemin:** Maybe the language of the bill should be changed?

**Greg Wilz:** I do not know. I am no expert on writing the bill. The money would come to the agency and we would then distribute it to the four regions equability.

**Rep. Jerry Kelsh:** Is this setting them out so that the local management will them be set up regionally soon?

**Greg Wilz:** I don't know. I don't believe this is has been sets it up. There are certainly pros and cons to that. At this point in time we are not advocating that. We believe each county should decide. We believe it is extremely important for local jurisdictions to build and including those relationships they have with their adjoining jurisdictions. When they train together that will build those relationships. We now have the ability to do that.

**Lois Hartman, Executive Director of ND Firefighter's Assoc.:** (see testimony #2).

**Rep. Kilichowski:** Going back to the subject of timing, when do they have to be implemented and how much funding do we need?

**Lois Hartman:** The ND Firefighter's Assoc. does not received federal dollars.

**Chairman Wrangham:** Is there any opposition?

**Any neutral?** We do expect to have some information coming from Rep. Porter at the next meeting so he asked if I could hold that open.

**Hearing closed.**

# 2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Bill No. HB 1055

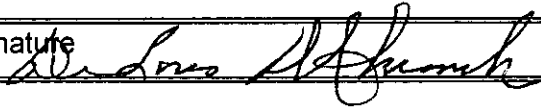
### House Political Subdivisions Committee

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Hearing Date: January 15, 2009

Recorder Job Number: 7103

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Chairman Wrangham reopened the hearing on HB 1055.

**Rep. Zaiser:** I think there is definitely a need for this. Some of the rural areas that travel so long.

**Rep. Klemin:** Lack of coordination and preparation noted.

Chairman Wrangham: It is again an increased appropriation bill. There is a study for them to do that I think they would normally do, but they are looking for more money to do it.

**Rep. Koppelman:** This funding has been requested to supplement the loss of federal dollars. There were federal grant dollars for states to do this but they have apparently stopped doing that.

**Rep. Jerry Kelsh:** Of those three bills 1056, 1055 and 1054 we do not know the ranking.

**Rep. Koppelman:** We asked them to rank them today and are not sure about it.

**Do Not Pass Motion Made By Rep. Kretschmar Seconded By Rep. Hatlestad**

**Vote: 11 Yes 2 No 0 Absent**

**Carrier: Rep. Kretschmar**

**Rep. Kilichowski:** Discussed need to do some things since money is decreasing and we need to help those folks out.

**Rep. Headland**

**Rep. Koppelman:** I agree that public safety is a high priority. Since it is in the governor's budget I think we are alright.

**Rep. Headland:** I believe that the agencies when they don't make their budgets and there is a perception of money there they may think we will just give it a shot and see where it falls and in this case they indicated it was not a priority and I think that is part of the reason we are seeing all these bills.

Hearing closed.



Roll Call Vote #: /

Date: 1-15-09

**2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES**  
**BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB1055**

House Political Subdivisions Committee

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Legislative Council Amendment Number \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken Do Pass Do Not Pass Amended

Motion Made By Rep Kretschmar Seconded By Rep Hatlestad

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Rep. Dwight Wrangham, Chairman	✓		Senator Kari Conrad	✓	
Rep. Craig Headland, Vice Chairman	✓		Senator Jerry Kelsh		✓
Rep. Patrick Hatlestad	✓		Senator Robert Kilichowski	✓	
Rep. Nancy Johnson	✓		Senator Corey Mock	✓	
Rep. Lawrence Klemin	✓		Senator Steve Zaiser		✓
Rep. Kim Koppelman	✓				
Rep. William Kretschmar	✓				
Rep. Vonnie Pietsch	✓				

Total (Yes) 11 No 2

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Rep Kretschmar

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**HB 1055: Political Subdivisions Committee (Rep. Wrangham, Chairman) recommends**  
**DO NOT PASS** (11 YEAS, 2 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1055 was  
placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2009 TESTIMONY

HB 1055

#1

TESTIMONY – HB 1055  
HOUSE COMMITTEE – POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS  
JANUARY 8, 2009  
BY GREG WILZ  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Greg Wilz. I am the Deputy Director of the Department of Emergency Services (NDDDES) and Director of Homeland Security for the state of North Dakota. Today I am here as a representative of the task force established at the request of the interim Public Safety Committee. The Public Safety Committee asked that the task force be established to request improvements to emergency services by adding organizational changes, system upgrades, process or protocol changes and statutory changes to ensure the future viability and capability of emergency services in North Dakota. Fifteen organizations were represented on the task force and are listed on the back of this testimony. My intent is to provide background information as was discussed within the task force and not to take an agency position on HB 1055.

The bill addresses a large gap created by decreasing federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grant funding and narrowing guidelines that severely restrict use of federal dollars for cross-discipline or cross-jurisdictional responder training and exercises.

During the past two years, all homeland security money received by the states has been tied to specific investment strategies linked directly to national priorities set forth by DHS. Consequently, training and exercise funds can be expended only for U.S. Office of Domestic Preparedness pre-approved courses that focus on terrorism and are geared toward weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

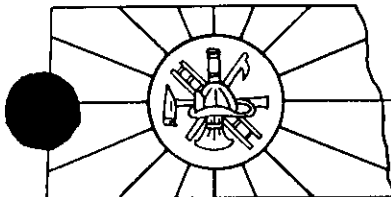
Although the threat of terrorism is a real concern, an assessment of risk places acts of nature and manmade accidents higher on the priority list of threats in North Dakota. HB 1055 requests funds to implement regional training and exercises that concentrate on these threats and provides a cross-discipline and cross-jurisdictional approach in preparing for wildland fires, train derailments, hazardous chemical spills, tornados, flooding, winter storms and search and rescue which are more germane to the needs of North Dakota responders.

Currently, training and exercises occur mainly within local jurisdictions without regard to regional involvement. Due to the complexity of incidents, declining numbers of volunteers, equipment expense, and new technologies, there is a distinct need for regional cooperation in which responders from neighboring jurisdictions train and exercise together. It is integral in developing lines of communication, trusting relationships, and common operating procedures which will produce much more organized, unified, and consistent response efforts. HB 1055 would provide funds to carry out regional training and exercises.

Thank you, I will try to answer any questions you may have.

## **Task Force Membership**

N.D. Department of Emergency Services  
N.D. Division of Homeland Security  
N.D. Division of State Radio  
N.D. Police Chiefs Association  
N.D. Sheriffs Assoc.  
N.D. Fire Chiefs Assoc.  
N.D. Metro Chiefs Assoc.  
N.D. Emergency Medical Services Assoc.  
N.D. Healthcare Assoc.  
N.D. Emergency Management Assoc.  
N.D. National Guard  
N.D. 911 Assoc.  
N.D. Public Health Assoc.  
N.D. Highway Patrol  
N.D. Bureau of Criminal Investigation



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*Firefighter's Association*

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Fax: 701-222-2899

# 2

**HB 1055**  
**Lois Hartman**  
**Executive Director**

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Political Subdivision Committee, my name is Lois Hartman. I am the Executive Director and State Training Director of the North Dakota Firefighter's Association. I appear before you today in support of HB 1055.

The approval of this bill and the appropriation will allow all emergency responders from a specific region to train together. Emergencies often times cross jurisdictional boundaries and include responders from varying disciplines. The ability to successfully manage and work through an emergency incident requires a collaborative effort and the knowledge of individual capabilities. Establishing a methodology for responders to train and exercise together enhances their ability to work as a team at the scene of an emergency. This bill formalizes multidiscipline and multijurisdictional training between emergency responders. I believe legislation of this type is long overdue. Therefore, I would urge a do pass for HB 1055.

Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to answer any questions you or the committee may have.

Thank You.