

HB 1139 Sales Tax Exemption

Good Morning, My Name is John Hejl and I am the fire chief in Casselton ND. The Casselton Fire Department provides fire protection for the cities of Casselton and Amenia as well as 12 townships in the surrounding area. This primary fire coverage area is 385 square miles and covers just over 4,500 North Dakotans. Not every fire department in North Dakota provides extrication; many of our neighboring departments do not. We are dispatched out automatically if extrication is needed for a number of our neighboring departments bringing our total extrication zone up to 745 square miles. The Insurance Services Organization has given us an ISO score of 4 putting us in the top 1% of fire departments in North Dakota when it comes to preparedness and proven efficiency.

Casselton Fire Department is organized as a 501c3. Most fire departments in North Dakota are either "Fire Protection Districts", "city" fire departments or a combination of both. The main ask of HB 1139 is to close up a small gap where fire departments like ours are left out of sales tax exemptions. This bill takes away the limiting definition of what a fire department is in North Dakota and leaves it to the State Fire Marshall's Office to grant a certificate of existence. Purchasing the equipment demanded of a fire department is expensive; this bill will go a long way in helping us use our funding efficiently to protect our residents.

Thank you for your time, I would appreciate any feedback or questions.

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