

House Political Sub Committee

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Testimony on Senate Bill 2218

Submitted by: Ken Wangen, Fire Chief Carrington Volunteer Fire and Rescue,
President North Dakota Fire Chiefs Association

Chairman Longmuir and members of the Committee, Good Morning. I want to thank you for considering Senate Bill 2218.

NDFA was established in 1884 in the Dakota Territory. Throughout their existence, the association's mission has been to provide opportunities to train and certify firefighters in the state. In 2017, a legislative study was conducted to codify the duties and roles of the North Dakota Firefighters Association. Century Code now states:

The North Dakota Firefighter's Association shall:

1. Develop and adopt a statewide fire education and training plan.
2. Coordinate fire service training at all levels.
3. Establish procedures to govern the certification process for firefighter training.

Before 1996, the NDFA was very poor in hands on equipment but rich in knowledge, but it had no home base office for the DVD's, Videos Tapes, Slide Decks, Overhead projection gels and general library materials which had to reside where the current Sec/Treas lived. This became more and more compounded after hiring a director and the NDFA was able to obtain grants for Burn Trailers, Liquid Fuels simulators, Collapse Search and Rescue, Grain Bin Rescue and many other scenarios type simulators. Rest assured that list only touches part of the equipment the NDFA now owns and maintains. Other pieces are delicate technologies such as secure computers for testing candidates for Pro Board, Fire Fighter 1, Fire Fighter 2 and Hazmat. They also own state of the art mobile based simulator that allow a near real experience of Driving an emergency vehicle and Pump Panel operations that allow a safe real time experience without the danger of operating a real vehicle and possibly causing damage to apparatus that now easily costs \$1,000,000 to replace and or 10's of thousands to repair. Naturally a director needed staff to coordinate, instruct with, and maintain these simulators and other equipment. It was obvious the requirements of building they occupied would also change. Relocation was the only means to find a building that would fit. Obviously, the need for central location to maintain, house and repair this equipment is not in question. The equipment needs to be in top condition when delivered to the instructors so they can focus on the instruction and hands on of the training and not waste time trying to repair or make the simulators work.

With this investment as requested from SIIF the State of North Dakota would afford the NDFA the opportunity to acquire an actual piece of real property that they could build on and configure as they need, with the result being an investment vs. paying rent and having to move as the need changes. Having seen the multiple phases, the NDFA has planned on additions it is also fiscally sound and enables the NDFA to continue providing the training and expand as the need arises without having to relocate. To top it off they can make the payment at a lower cost than the rent and provide for more training with the saved dollars. That to me sounds like a very good investment to the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration, please pass SB 2218 so we can continue to train and support our Firefighters. I will stand for any questions you may have.

Ken Wangen

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