

2025 HOUSE INDUSTRY, BUSINESS AND LABOR

HB 1249

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Industry, Business and Labor Committee Room JW327C, State Capitol

HB 1249
1/29/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide appropriations to the attorney general, the department of career and technical education, the department of health and human services, the agriculture commissioner, and the department of transportation for autonomous technology grants; to provide for a legislative management study; and to provide a report.

2:21 p.m. Chairman Warrey opened the meeting.

Members Present: Chairman Warrey, Vice Chairman Ostlie, Vice Chairman Johnson, Representatives Bahl, Brown, Christy, Finley-DeVile, Grindberg, Kasper, Koppelman, D. Ruby, Schatz, Schauer, Vollmer

Discussion Topics:

- Study language
- Invasive weed species
- Establishing an autonomous technology program
- Mitigation plan
- Food security = national security
- Efficiency
- ND leading the nation
- Drone integration
- Law enforcement component

2:21 p.m. Representative Jared Hagert, District 20, Emerado, ND, introduced and submitted testimony #30790.

2:25 p.m. Frank Matus, Chair, NS UAS Council, testified in favor (online) and (online) submitted testimony #30647

2:40 p.m. Samantha Brunner, Plant Industries Division Director, ND Department of Agriculture, testified in favor and submitted testimony #32697.

2:51 p.m. Darren Hanson, Homeland Division Director, ND Department of Emergency Services, testified as neutral.

2:55 p.m. Chad Om, Deputy Director for Planning, ND Department of Transportation, testified as neutral and submitted testimony #30486.

2:58 p.m. Representative Koppelman moved to amend Page 3 line 4 striking "and the development of a drone racing course." And by changing the "department of transportation" to the department of emergency services wherever it appears.

2:58 p.m. Representative Christy seconded the motion.

Voice vote.

Motion passed.

2:58 p.m. Representative Bahl moved Do Pass as amended and Referred to Appropriations..

2:58 p.m. Representative Schauer seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Jonathan Warrey	Y
Representative Mitch Ostlie	Y
Representative Landon Bahl	Y
Representative Collette Brown	Y
Representative Josh Christy	Y
Representative Lisa Finley-DeVille	Y
Representative Karen Grindberg	Y
Representative Jorin Johnson	Y
Representative Jim Kasper	Y
Representative Ben Koppelman	Y
Representative Dan Ruby	Y
Representative Mike Schatz	AB
Representative Austin Schauer	Y
Representative Daniel R. Vollmer	Y

Motion passed 13-0-1.

2:59 p.m. Representative Christy will carry the bill.

Additional written testimony:

Greta A. Silewski, Project Consultant, Thales USA, submitted testimony in favor #32554

3:00 p.m. Chairman Warrey closed the meeting.

Diane Lillis, Committee Clerk

January 29, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

HOUSE BILL NO. 1249

Introduced by

Representatives Hagert, Christy, Headland, Mitskog, Nathe, O'Brien, Schreiber-Beck,
Stemen

Senators Barta, Bekkedahl, Sickler, Thomas

1 A BILL for an Act to provide appropriations to the attorney general, the department of career and
2 technical education, the department of health and human services, the agriculture
3 commissioner, and the ~~department of transportation~~ department of emergency services for
4 autonomous technology grants; to provide for a legislative management study; and to provide a
5 report.

6 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

7 **SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION - ATTORNEY GENERAL - AUTONOMOUS**
8 **TECHNOLOGY GRANTS - ONE-TIME FUNDING - REPORT TO LEGISLATIVE**
9 **MANAGEMENT.**

- 10 1. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not
11 otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$750,000, or so much of the sum as may be
12 necessary, to the attorney general for the purpose of providing autonomous
13 technology grants to individuals or entities that aid the bureau of criminal investigation
14 in conducting missing person searches, crime scene reconstruction, and law
15 enforcement first response operations, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and
16 ending June 30, 2027. The funding provided in this section is considered a one-time
17 funding item.
- 18 2. For purposes of this section, autonomous technology includes uncrewed aircraft
19 systems; autonomous vehicles; or other autonomous systems, processes, or
20 technologies.

JB 2006

3. The attorney general shall develop an application process and guidelines for the grants, including eligibility criteria, matching requirements, eligible uses of grant funding, and maximum grant awards. To be eligible for a grant, an individual or entity shall certify to the attorney general that the operation of the autonomous technology is related to conducting missing person searches, crime scene reconstruction, and law enforcement first response operations. The attorney general may require an individual or entity to provide one dollar of matching funds for every four dollars awarded by the state. An individual or entity may use grant funding for autonomous technology operations, contracting for services related to autonomous technology, or other eligible uses as determined by the attorney general.
4. During the 2025-26 interim, the attorney general shall provide at least one report to the legislative management regarding the grants, including a list of grant recipients, the amounts awarded, and a description of the use of the grant funding.

**SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL
EDUCATION - AUTONOMOUS TECHNOLOGY GRANTS - ONE-TIME FUNDING - REPORT
TO LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT.**

1. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$750,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, to the department of career and technical education for the purpose of providing autonomous technology grants to a workforce training center serving the northwest area of the state for providing workforce training to address workforce shortages in the state, including shortages in the oil and gas industry, ~~and for the development of a drone racing course~~, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The funding provided in this section is considered a one-time funding item.
2. For purposes of this section, autonomous technology includes uncrewed aircraft systems; autonomous vehicles; or other autonomous systems, processes, or technologies.
3. The department of career and technical education shall develop an application process and guidelines for the grants, including eligibility criteria, matching requirements, eligible uses of grant funding, and maximum grant awards. To be

Jim 3066

1 eligible for a grant, a workforce training center shall certify to the department of career
2 and technical education that the operation of the autonomous technology is related to
3 workforce training to address workforce shortages in the state, including shortages in
4 the oil and gas industry, ~~and the development of a drone racing course~~. The
5 department of career and technical education may require a workforce training center
6 to provide one dollar of matching funds for every four dollars awarded by the state. A
7 workforce training center may use grant funding for education or training curriculum
8 expenses related to autonomous technology, autonomous technology operations,
9 contracting for services related to autonomous technology, or other eligible uses as
10 determined by the department of career and technical education.

11 4. During the 2025-26 interim, the department of career and technical education shall
12 provide at least one report to the legislative management regarding the grants,
13 including a list of grant recipients, the amounts awarded, and a description of the use
14 of the grant funding.

15 **SECTION 3. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES -**
16 **AUTONOMOUS TECHNOLOGY GRANTS - ONE-TIME FUNDING - REPORT TO**
17 **LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT.**

18 1. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not
19 otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$750,000, or so much of the sum as may be
20 necessary, to the department of health and human services for the purpose of
21 providing autonomous technology grants to individuals or entities that aid the functions
22 and operations of rural emergency response and disaster mitigation, for the biennium
23 beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The funding provided in this
24 section is considered a one-time funding item.

25 2. For purposes of this section, autonomous technology includes uncrewed aircraft
26 systems; autonomous vehicles; or other autonomous systems, processes, or
27 technologies.

28 3. The department of health and human services shall develop an application process
29 and guidelines for the grants, including eligibility criteria, matching requirements,
30 eligible uses of grant funding, and maximum grant awards. To be eligible for a grant,
31 an individual or entity shall certify to the department of health and human services that

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1 the operation of the autonomous technology is related to aiding the functions and
2 operations of rural emergency response and disaster mitigation. The department of
3 health and human services may require an individual or entity to provide one dollar of
4 matching funds for every four dollars awarded by the state. An individual or entity may
5 use grant funding for autonomous technology operations, contracting for services
6 related to autonomous technology, or other eligible uses as determined by the
7 department of health and human services.

- 8 4. During the 2025-26 interim, the department of health and human services shall
9 provide at least one report to the legislative management regarding the grants,
10 including a list of grant recipients, the amounts awarded, and a description of the use
11 of the grant funding.

12 **SECTION 4. APPROPRIATION - AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER - AUTONOMOUS**
13 **TECHNOLOGY GRANTS - ONE-TIME FUNDING - REPORT TO LEGISLATIVE**
14 **MANAGEMENT.**

- 15 1. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not
16 otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$750,000, or so much of the sum as may be
17 necessary, to the agriculture commissioner for the purpose of providing autonomous
18 technology grants to individuals or entities in the agriculture industry, for the biennium
19 beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The funding provided in this
20 section is considered a one-time funding item.
- 21 2. For purposes of this section, autonomous technology includes uncrewed aircraft
22 systems; autonomous vehicles; or other autonomous systems, processes, or
23 technologies.
- 24 3. The agriculture commissioner shall develop an application process and guidelines for
25 the grants, including eligibility criteria, matching requirements, eligible uses of grant
26 funding, and maximum grant awards. To be eligible for a grant, an individual or entity
27 shall certify to the agriculture commissioner that the operation of the autonomous
28 technology is related to the inspection, operation, maintenance, or construction of
29 agriculture property or infrastructure. The agriculture commissioner may require an
30 individual or entity to provide one dollar of matching funds for every four dollars
31 awarded by the state. An individual or entity may use grant funding for autonomous

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1 technology operations, contracting for services related to autonomous technology, or
2 other eligible uses as determined by the agriculture commissioner.

3 4. During the 2025-26 interim, the agriculture commissioner shall provide at least one
4 report to the legislative management regarding the grants, including a list of grant
5 recipients, the amounts awarded, and a description of the use of the grant funding.

6 **SECTION 5. APPROPRIATION - ~~DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION~~ DEPARTMENT**
7 **OF EMERGENCY SERVICES - AUTONOMOUS TECHNOLOGY GRANTS - ONE-TIME**
8 **FUNDING - REPORT TO LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT.**

9 1. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not
10 otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$750,000, or so much of the sum as may be
11 necessary, to the ~~department of transportation~~ department of emergency services for
12 the purpose of providing autonomous technology grants to individuals or entities that
13 monitor the United States highway 2 corridor within the state to assist local and state
14 law enforcement agencies, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending
15 June 30, 2027. The funding provided in this section is considered a one-time funding
16 item.

17 2. For purposes of this section, autonomous technology includes uncrewed aircraft
18 systems; autonomous vehicles; or other autonomous systems, processes, or
19 technologies.

20 3. The ~~department of transportation~~ department of emergency services shall develop an
21 application process and guidelines for the grants, including eligibility criteria, matching
22 requirements, eligible uses of grant funding, and maximum grant awards. To be
23 eligible for a grant, an individual or entity shall certify to the ~~department of~~
24 ~~transportation~~ department of emergency services that the operation of the autonomous
25 technology is related to monitoring the United States highway 2 corridor within the
26 state to assist local and state law enforcement agencies. The ~~department of~~
27 ~~transportation~~ department of emergency services may require an individual or entity to
28 provide one dollar of matching funds for every four dollars awarded by the state. An
29 individual or entity may use grant funding for autonomous technology operations,
30 contracting for services related to autonomous technology, or other eligible uses as
31 determined by the ~~department of transportation~~ department of emergency services.

July 6th

- 1 4. During the 2025-26 interim, the ~~department of transportation~~department of emergency
2 services shall provide at least one report to the legislative management regarding the
3 grants, including a list of grant recipients, the amounts awarded, and a description of
4 the use of the grant funding.

5 **SECTION 6. LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT STUDY - AUTONOMOUS TECHNOLOGY.**

6 During the 2025-26 interim, the legislative management shall consider studying the costs and
7 benefits of investing in autonomous technology infrastructure in the state. The study must
8 include an analysis of the industries using autonomous technology, future industries that may
9 use autonomous technology, the economic impact of autonomous technology, and the return on
10 investment to the state. The legislative management shall report its findings and
11 recommendations, together with any legislation required to implement the recommendations, to
12 the seventieth legislative assembly.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HB 1249**

Industry, Business and Labor Committee (Rep. Warrey, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.0756.01001](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** and **BE REREFERRED** to the **Appropriations Committee** (13 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1249 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

**House Bill No. 1249****House Industry, Business & Labor**

Room 327C | January 22, 2025, 10:30 a.m.
Chad M. Orn, Deputy Director for Planning

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Chad M. Orn, Deputy Director for Planning for the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT). I am here to provide testimony on HB 1249.

Section 5 of HB 1249 proposes to provide \$750,000 to the NDDOT for the purpose of providing autonomous technology grants to individuals and entities that monitor the US Highway 2 corridor to assist local and state law enforcement agencies. NDDOT shall develop an application process and guidelines, including eligibility criteria, matching requirements, eligible uses of the grant, and maximum grant awards. To be eligible, the grant recipient must certify to the NDDOT that the operation of the autonomous technology is related to monitoring US Highway 2 and to assist local and state law enforcement agencies.

The NDDOT oversees and manages a vast road and bridge network across the state. Within the NDDOT, we do use autonomous technology such as uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS) for our own use in construction and structure inspections, emergency response, surveying, communication efforts, etc. Our agency is structured and staffed to complete that mission.

There are roughly 10 state agencies as well as many local entities who use UAS to achieve various objectives, with focuses that vary significantly depending on their missions. Since the intent of this grant is to assist law enforcement along the US Highway 2 corridor, we believe appropriation and oversight of the grant would be more effectively managed by a law enforcement agency. Such an agency would be best equipped to define the necessary criteria, requirements, and eligibilities for the grant, ensuring the \$750,000 allocation delivers maximum benefits.

If the bill passes as written, we may need to permit items installed within highway right of way and would need authority depending on what the items may be. Highway right of way is to be used for highway purposes, and since law enforcement does not fall under the NDDOT, special authority may be needed to permit various devices for law enforcement purposes.

This concludes my testimony - I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.



Chairman Warrey and Members of the House IBL Committee-

The North Dakota UAS Council is in strong support of House Bill 1249, which expands the application of autonomous technologies across state agencies to address critical challenges, improve efficiency, and maintain our state's position as a leader in innovation.

Building on Past Success

During the 2023 legislative session, the North Dakota Legislature funded the Palmer Amaranth UAS program under HB1519. This program successfully utilized uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS) to fly and gather imagery, which was instrumental in building an AI model to detect the invasive weed species Palmer Amaranth. This innovative approach highlighted the effectiveness of UAS in solving complex challenges efficiently.

House Bill 1249 extends this proven model to other sectors, providing vital funding for:

- **Agriculture:** Expanding efforts to protect crops and ensure food security by leveraging UAS and AI for statewide invasive species detection.
- **Workforce Development:** Supporting programs like TrainND to prepare workers for autonomous technology jobs, addressing labor shortages and fostering economic growth.
- **Public Safety:** Enabling the use of UAS for search and rescue operations, crime scene reconstruction, and disaster response to improve outcomes and reduce costs.
- **Infrastructure Monitoring:** Enhancing road safety and transportation efficiency by deploying autonomous systems to monitor critical corridors like U.S. Highway 2.

By advancing autonomous technology integration, HB1249 addresses real-world challenges while ensuring North Dakota remains at the forefront of innovation. These investments will improve efficiency, protect critical resources, and equip the workforce with the skills needed for future technologies.

House Bill 1249 is an investment in North Dakota's future, building on past successes and fostering innovation that strengthens our economy, workforce, and public systems. I urge the committee to support this important legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Frank Matus

Chair, North Dakota Unmanned Autonomous Systems Council

Chairman Warrey and members of the House Industry Business and Labor Committee,

HB1249 builds upon the successful implementation of HB1519 from the 2023 session. The bill provides appropriations to five agencies (Attorney General, Dept. of Career and Technical Education, Dept. of Health and Human Services, Ag Commissioner, and the Dept. of Transportation) while also providing study and report language to quantify the work done.

The Bill appropriates \$750,000 to these agencies to fund the grant programs for uncrewed aircraft systems, other autonomous systems, processes or technologies, bringing the total amount appropriated to \$3,750,000 from the general fund. The controlling agencies may require the contracted parties to provide one dollar for every four dollars awarded.

The program implemented in HB1519 through the Ag Commissioner was successful in bringing private industry, research institutions, and those in that value chain to identify a palmer amaranth, a highly invasive weed that is plaguing ag producers in the U.S.

Train ND built the first BVLOS program in the country, and students that graduated from that program are currently employed in the state, further demonstrating the success of the previous program.

Representative Jared Hagert D-20

Testimony in Support of HB 1249
Submitted by: Greta Silewski
Project Consultant, Thales USA
January 29, 2025

Chairman Jonathan Warrey and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony today in support of HB 1249. My name is Greta Silewski, and I am here to speak as a previous awardee of the North Dakota Department of Agriculture's Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS) Grant, funded through HB 1519 in the previous biennium. Our work under that grant has demonstrated the immense value of autonomous technology in advancing precision agriculture and protecting North Dakota's agricultural economy. I urge your continued support to ensure this critical work continues to drive innovation and protect our agricultural sector.

Successes of the Palmer Amaranth UAS and AI Project

In 2023, through funding provided by HB 1519, we successfully executed the Palmer Amaranth UAS and AI Project—a collaborative initiative led by the Northern Plains UAS Test Site in partnership with Thales USA, North Dakota State University, iSight Drone Services, and Grand Farm. Our objective was to leverage UAS and AI technology to detect and mitigate the spread of Palmer amaranth, an invasive weed that poses a serious threat to North Dakota's food security.

Over the past year, our efforts have yielded remarkable results:

- **Data Collection & AI Development:** We conducted UAS flights across multiple locations, capturing over 40,000 high-resolution images to train an AI model for precise detection of Palmer amaranth. The AI model, developed using advanced object detection techniques (YOLO v8), achieved detection accuracy rates of 76-77%.
- **Farmer & Stakeholder Engagement:** We collaborated with farmers, county weed officers, and commodity councils to integrate our technology into real-world agricultural practices, providing a proactive solution to prevent infestations before they spread.
- **Scalability & Future Applications:** Our work has demonstrated the feasibility of expanding UAS and AI solutions beyond Palmer amaranth detection, enabling applications for nutrient management, crop disease detection, and precision weed mapping.
- **Role of Vantis in BVLOS Expansion:** As North Dakota explores ways to scale this project, integrating Vantis, the state's UAS system for beyond visual line-of-sight (BVLOS) operations, will allow faster, more efficient detection and treatment.
- **Broader UAS Ecosystem Expansion:** This project serves as a replicable model for other state departments and agencies, demonstrating how UAS technology can be leveraged in emergency response, infrastructure inspections, and environmental monitoring. Expanding these applications will strengthen North Dakota's leadership in UAS and autonomy.

Why Continued Funding is Necessary

HB 1249 includes \$750,000 in autonomous technology grants under the North Dakota Agriculture Commissioner, which could directly support the continuation and expansion of projects like ours. This funding is essential for several reasons:

1. **Protecting North Dakota's Agriculture:** Palmer amaranth, if left unchecked, can lead to significant yield losses and increased herbicide reliance. Early detection using AI-driven UAS technology has proven to be an effective and cost-efficient solution.
2. **Enhancing Food Security Through Technology:** The integration of UAS and AI provides real-time data analysis crucial for identifying and mitigating agricultural threats, ensuring long-term food security.
3. **Supporting Economic Growth & Workforce Development:** Expanding this program creates high-tech jobs and supports workforce training for North Dakota's next generation of agricultural and autonomous technology professionals.
4. **Legislative Support to Foster Innovation:** By investing in these technologies, North Dakota is fostering collaboration between public and private entities to drive agricultural innovation and maintain its leadership in precision agriculture.
5. **Replicable Across Other Departments:** The success of this initiative highlights the potential for integrating UAS solutions in other state programs, from transportation and law enforcement to environmental monitoring and emergency response. By broadening these applications, North Dakota can continue to lead in the deployment of autonomous technologies for public benefit.

Conclusion

Our state's agricultural industry depends on forward-thinking policies and investments that address both current and future challenges. The success of the Palmer Amaranth UAS and AI Project under HB 1519 serves as proof of concept for how targeted funding can drive innovation and deliver tangible benefits to farmers and stakeholders. By renewing funding under HB 1249, we can continue protecting our food security, advancing technology-driven solutions, and fostering economic growth in North Dakota.

I respectfully urge the committee to support HB 1249 and ensure that funding for autonomous technology within our state departments remains a priority. Investing in these technologies will not only support agriculture but also expand North Dakota's leadership in UAS and its applications across multiple sectors.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to reach out for further discussion or additional details.

Respectfully,
Greta Silewski

COMMISSIONER
DOUG GOEHRING



ndda@nd.gov
www.ndda.nd.gov

NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
STATE CAPITOL
600 E. BOULEVARD AVE. - DEPT. 602
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0020

Testimony of Samantha Brunner
Plant Industries Division Director
House Industry, Business and Labor
Room 327C
January 29, 2025

Chairman Warrey and members of the House Industry, Business and Labor Committee, I am Samantha Brunner, Plant Industries Division Director here on behalf of Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring. I am here today in support of HB 1249, autonomous technology grants.

The 2023 Legislative session created a grant program with \$275,000 available to the Agriculture Commissioner for the use of autonomous technology grants in agricultural industries. With these funds the commissioner awarded a grant to a collective group including The Northern Plains UAS Test Site, Thales, North Dakota State University, Grand Farm, and ISight Drone Services to develop a system to use UAS to detect palmer amaranth in cropping systems. This grant project is currently in progress if successful could create a fast, and reliable way to identify such a problematic weed in cropping systems allowing expedited treatment and targeted control.

Funds from the current bill could be used to support county weed boards in establishing county wide survey for invasive noxious weeds via aircraft, or creation of systems to detect new or threatening weed species. UAS could

simultaneously be used to spot spray affected areas to remove the noxious species.

Chairman Warrey and committee members, thank you for your time. I urge a do pass on HB 1249. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

2025 HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS

HB 1249

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee Roughrider Room, State Capitol

HB 1249
2/13/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide appropriations to the attorney general, the department of career and technical education, the department of health and human services, the agriculture commissioner, and the department of emergency services for autonomous technology grants; to provide for a legislative management study; and to provide a report.

10:00 a.m. Chairman Vigesaa called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Chairman Vigesaa, Vice Chairman Kempenich, Representatives Anderson, Berg, Bosch, Brandenburg, Fisher, Hanson, Louser, Martinson, Meier, Mitskog, Monson, Murphy, Nathe, Nelson, O'Brien, Pyle, Richter, Sanford, Stemen, Swiontek, Wagner

Discussion Topics:

- Criminal Investigation
- Law Enforcement
- Emergency Services

10:00 a.m. Representative Warrey introduced the Bill.

10:10 a.m. Darin Hanson, DES Homeland Security Director, testified neutrally and answered questions.

10:13 a.m. Representative Warrey answered questions.

10:16 a.m. Chairman Vigesaa closed the meeting.

Sierra Schartz, Committee Clerk

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee Roughrider Room, State Capitol

HB 1249
2/19/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide appropriations to the attorney general, the department of career and technical education, the department of health and human services, the agriculture commissioner, and the department of emergency services for autonomous technology grants; to provide for a legislative management study; and to provide a report.

6:01 p.m. Chairman Vigesaa called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Chairman Vigesaa, Vice Chairman Kempenich, Representatives Anderson, Berg, Bosch, Brandenburg, Fisher, Hanson, Louser, Martinson, Meier, Mitskog, Monson, Murphy, Nathe, Nelson, O'Brien, Pyle, Richter, Sanford, Stemen, Swiontek, Wagner

Discussion Topics:

- Committee Work

6:01 p.m. Chairman Vigesaa Introduced the amendment LC #25.0756.02002 #38112

6:02 p.m. Representative Stemen moved to adopt amendment LC #25.0756.02003.

Representative Nathe seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Representatives	Vote
Representative Don Vigesaa	Y
Representative Keith Kempenich	Y
Representative Bert Anderson	Y
Representative Mike Berg	Y
Representative Glenn Bosch	Y
Representative Mike Brandenburg	Y
Representative Jay Fisher	Y
Representative Karla Rose Hanson	Y
Representative Scott Louser	Y
Representative Bob Martinson	Y
Representative Lisa Meier	Y
Representative Alisa Mitskog	Y
Representative David Monson	Y
Representative Eric J. Murphy	Y
Representative Mike Nathe	Y
Representative Jon O. Nelson	Y
Representative Emily O'Brien	Y
Representative Brandy L. Pyle	Y

Representative David Richter	Y
Representative Mark Sanford	Y
Representative Gregory Stemen	Y
Representative Steve Swiontek	Y
Representative Scott Wagner	Y

Motion passed 23-0-0.

6:06 p.m. Representative Hanson moved to further amend by removing Section 5.

Representative Louser seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Representatives	Vote
Representative Don Vigesaa	Y
Representative Keith Kempenich	Y
Representative Bert Anderson	Y
Representative Mike Berg	Y
Representative Glenn Bosch	Y
Representative Mike Brandenburg	Y
Representative Jay Fisher	Y
Representative Karla Rose Hanson	Y
Representative Scott Louser	Y
Representative Bob Martinson	Y
Representative Lisa Meier	Y
Representative Alisa Mitskog	Y
Representative David Monson	Y
Representative Eric J. Murphy	Y
Representative Mike Nathe	Y
Representative Jon O. Nelson	Y
Representative Emily O'Brien	Y
Representative Brandy L. Pyle	Y
Representative David Richter	Y
Representative Mark Sanford	Y
Representative Gregory Stemen	Y
Representative Steve Swiontek	Y
Representative Scott Wagner	Y

Motion passed 23-0-0.

6:08 p.m. Representative Hanson moved a Do Not Pass as Amended.

Representative Brandenburg seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Representatives	Vote
Representative Don Vigesaa	N
Representative Keith Kempenich	Y
Representative Bert Anderson	N
Representative Mike Berg	N
Representative Glenn Bosch	Y
Representative Mike Brandenburg	N
Representative Jay Fisher	Y
Representative Karla Rose Hanson	Y
Representative Scott Louser	Y
Representative Bob Martinson	Y
Representative Lisa Meier	Y
Representative Alisa Mitskog	Y
Representative David Monson	Y
Representative Eric J. Murphy	Y
Representative Mike Nathe	N
Representative Jon O. Nelson	Y
Representative Emily O'Brien	Y
Representative Brandy L. Pyle	Y
Representative David Richter	Y
Representative Mark Sanford	N
Representative Gregory Stemen	N
Representative Steve Swiontek	Y
Representative Scott Wagner	N

Motion passed 15-8-0 Representative Hanson will carry.

Additional written testimony:

Chairman Vigesaa submitted testimony in favor #38112.

6:12 p.m. Chairman Vigesaa closed the meeting.

Krystal Eberle for Sierra Schartz, Committee Clerk

February 19, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO
FIRST ENGROSSMENT**

2,20-25
JB 1 of 6

ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1249

Introduced by

Representatives Hagert, Christy, Headland, Mitskog, Nathe, O'Brien, Schreiber-Beck,
Stemen

Senators Barta, Bekkedahl, Sickler, Thomas

1 A BILL for an Act to provide appropriations to the attorney general, the department of career and
2 technical education, the department of health and human services, and the agriculture
3 commissioner, ~~and the department of emergency services~~ for autonomous technology grants; to
4 provide for a legislative management study; and to provide a report.

5 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

6 **SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION - ATTORNEY GENERAL - AUTONOMOUS**
7 **TECHNOLOGY GRANTS - ONE-TIME FUNDING - REPORT TO LEGISLATIVE**
8 **MANAGEMENT.**

- 9 1. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not
10 otherwise appropriated, the sum of ~~\$750,000~~ \$250,000, or so much of the sum as may
11 be necessary, to the attorney general for the purpose of providing autonomous
12 technology grants to individuals or entities that aid the bureau of criminal investigation
13 in conducting missing person searches, crime scene reconstruction, and law
14 enforcement first response operations, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and
15 ending June 30, 2027. The funding provided in this section is considered a one-time
16 funding item.
- 17 2. For purposes of this section, autonomous technology includes uncrewed aircraft
18 systems; autonomous vehicles; or other autonomous systems, processes, or
19 technologies.

3. The attorney general shall develop an application process and guidelines for the grants, including eligibility criteria, matching requirements, eligible uses of grant funding, and maximum grant awards. To be eligible for a grant, an individual or entity shall certify to the attorney general that the operation of the autonomous technology is related to conducting missing person searches, crime scene reconstruction, and law enforcement first response operations. The attorney general may require an individual or entity to provide one dollar of matching funds for every four dollars awarded by the state. An individual or entity may use grant funding for autonomous technology operations, contracting for services related to autonomous technology, or other eligible uses as determined by the attorney general.
4. During the 2025-26 interim, the attorney general shall provide at least one report to the legislative management regarding the grants, including a list of grant recipients, the amounts awarded, and a description of the use of the grant funding.

**SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL
EDUCATION - AUTONOMOUS TECHNOLOGY GRANTS - ONE-TIME FUNDING - REPORT
TO LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT.**

1. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of ~~\$750,000~~ \$500,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, to the department of career and technical education for the purpose of providing autonomous technology grants to a workforce training center serving the northwest area of the state for providing workforce training to address workforce shortages in the state, including shortages in the oil and gas industry for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The funding provided in this section is considered a one-time funding item.
2. For purposes of this section, autonomous technology includes uncrewed aircraft systems; autonomous vehicles; or other autonomous systems, processes, or technologies.
3. The department of career and technical education shall develop an application process and guidelines for the grants, including eligibility criteria, matching requirements, eligible uses of grant funding, and maximum grant awards. To be eligible for a grant, a workforce training center shall certify to the department of career

and technical education that the operation of the autonomous technology is related to workforce training to address workforce shortages in the state, including shortages in the oil and gas industry. The department of career and technical education may require a workforce training center to provide one dollar of matching funds for every four dollars awarded by the state. A workforce training center may use grant funding for education or training curriculum expenses related to autonomous technology, autonomous technology operations, contracting for services related to autonomous technology, or other eligible uses as determined by the department of career and technical education.

4. During the 2025-26 interim, the department of career and technical education shall provide at least one report to the legislative management regarding the grants, including a list of grant recipients, the amounts awarded, and a description of the use of the grant funding.

**SECTION 3. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES -
AUTONOMOUS TECHNOLOGY GRANTS - ONE-TIME FUNDING - REPORT TO
LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT.**

1. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of ~~\$750,000~~ \$250,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, to the department of health and human services for the purpose of providing autonomous technology grants to individuals or entities that aid the functions and operations of rural emergency response and disaster mitigation, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The funding provided in this section is considered a one-time funding item.
2. For purposes of this section, autonomous technology includes uncrewed aircraft systems; autonomous vehicles; or other autonomous systems, processes, or technologies.
3. The department of health and human services shall develop an application process and guidelines for the grants, including eligibility criteria, matching requirements, eligible uses of grant funding, and maximum grant awards. To be eligible for a grant, an individual or entity shall certify to the department of health and human services that the operation of the autonomous technology is related to aiding the functions and

operations of rural emergency response and disaster mitigation. The department of health and human services may require an individual or entity to provide one dollar of matching funds for every four dollars awarded by the state. An individual or entity may use grant funding for autonomous technology operations, contracting for services related to autonomous technology, or other eligible uses as determined by the department of health and human services.

4. During the 2025-26 interim, the department of health and human services shall provide at least one report to the legislative management regarding the grants, including a list of grant recipients, the amounts awarded, and a description of the use of the grant funding.

SECTION 4. APPROPRIATION - AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER - AUTONOMOUS TECHNOLOGY GRANTS - ONE-TIME FUNDING - REPORT TO LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT.

1. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of ~~\$750,000~~ \$500,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, to the agriculture commissioner for the purpose of providing autonomous technology grants to individuals or entities in the agriculture industry, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The funding provided in this section is considered a one-time funding item.
2. For purposes of this section, autonomous technology includes uncrewed aircraft systems; autonomous vehicles; or other autonomous systems, processes, or technologies.
3. The agriculture commissioner shall develop an application process and guidelines for the grants, including eligibility criteria, matching requirements, eligible uses of grant funding, and maximum grant awards. To be eligible for a grant, an individual or entity shall certify to the agriculture commissioner that the operation of the autonomous technology is related to the inspection, operation, maintenance, or construction of agriculture property or infrastructure. The agriculture commissioner may require an individual or entity to provide one dollar of matching funds for every four dollars awarded by the state. An individual or entity may use grant funding for autonomous

technology operations, contracting for services related to autonomous technology, or other eligible uses as determined by the agriculture commissioner.

4. During the 2025-26 interim, the agriculture commissioner shall provide at least one report to the legislative management regarding the grants, including a list of grant recipients, the amounts awarded, and a description of the use of the grant funding.

~~**SECTION 5. APPROPRIATION DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES-
AUTONOMOUS TECHNOLOGY GRANTS ONE-TIME FUNDING REPORT TO
LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT.**~~

- ~~1. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$750,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, to the department of emergency services for the purpose of providing autonomous technology grants to individuals or entities that monitor the United States highway 2 corridor within the state to assist local and state law enforcement agencies, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The funding provided in this section is considered a one-time funding item.~~
- ~~2. For purposes of this section, autonomous technology includes uncrewed aircraft systems; autonomous vehicles; or other autonomous systems, processes, or technologies.~~
- ~~3. The department of emergency services shall develop an application process and guidelines for the grants, including eligibility criteria, matching requirements, eligible uses of grant funding, and maximum grant awards. To be eligible for a grant, an individual or entity shall certify to the department of emergency services that the operation of the autonomous technology is related to monitoring the United States highway 2 corridor within the state to assist local and state law enforcement agencies. The department of emergency services may require an individual or entity to provide one dollar of matching funds for every four dollars awarded by the state. An individual or entity may use grant funding for autonomous technology operations, contracting for services related to autonomous technology, or other eligible uses as determined by the department of emergency services.~~
- ~~4. During the 2025-26 interim, the department of emergency services shall provide at least one report to the legislative management regarding the grants, including a list of~~

1 ~~grant recipients, the amounts awarded, and a description of the use of the grant~~
2 ~~funding.~~

3 **SECTION 5. LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT STUDY - AUTONOMOUS TECHNOLOGY.**

4 During the 2025-26 interim, the legislative management shall consider studying the costs and
5 benefits of investing in autonomous technology infrastructure in the state. The study must
6 include an analysis of the industries using autonomous technology, future industries that may
7 use autonomous technology, the economic impact of autonomous technology, and the return on
8 investment to the state. The legislative management shall report its findings and
9 recommendations, together with any legislation required to implement the recommendations, to
10 the seventieth legislative assembly.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
ENGROSSED HB 1249**

Appropriations Committee (Rep. Vigesaa, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS** [\(25.0756.02003\)](#) and when so amended, recommends **DO NOT PASS** (15 YEAS, 8 NAYS, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1249 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

25.0756.02002
Title.

Prepared by the Legislative Council
staff for Representative Vigesaa
February 19, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO
FIRST ENGROSSMENT**

ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1249

Introduced by

Representatives Hagert, Christy, Headland, Mitskog, Nathe, O'Brien, Schreiber-Beck,
Stemen

Senators Barta, Bekkedahl, Sickler, Thomas

1 A BILL for an Act to provide appropriations to the attorney general, the department of career and
2 technical education, the department of health and human services, the agriculture
3 commissioner, and the department of emergency services for autonomous technology grants; to
4 provide for a legislative management study; and to provide a report.

5 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

6 **SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION - ATTORNEY GENERAL - AUTONOMOUS**
7 **TECHNOLOGY GRANTS - ONE-TIME FUNDING - REPORT TO LEGISLATIVE**
8 **MANAGEMENT.**

- 9 1. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not
10 otherwise appropriated, the sum of ~~\$750,000~~ \$250,000, or so much of the sum as may
11 be necessary, to the attorney general for the purpose of providing autonomous
12 technology grants to individuals or entities that aid the bureau of criminal investigation
13 in conducting missing person searches, crime scene reconstruction, and law
14 enforcement first response operations, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and
15 ending June 30, 2027. The funding provided in this section is considered a one-time
16 funding item.
- 17 2. For purposes of this section, autonomous technology includes uncrewed aircraft
18 systems; autonomous vehicles; or other autonomous systems, processes, or
19 technologies.

3. The attorney general shall develop an application process and guidelines for the grants, including eligibility criteria, matching requirements, eligible uses of grant funding, and maximum grant awards. To be eligible for a grant, an individual or entity shall certify to the attorney general that the operation of the autonomous technology is related to conducting missing person searches, crime scene reconstruction, and law enforcement first response operations. The attorney general may require an individual or entity to provide one dollar of matching funds for every four dollars awarded by the state. An individual or entity may use grant funding for autonomous technology operations, contracting for services related to autonomous technology, or other eligible uses as determined by the attorney general.
4. During the 2025-26 interim, the attorney general shall provide at least one report to the legislative management regarding the grants, including a list of grant recipients, the amounts awarded, and a description of the use of the grant funding.

**SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL
EDUCATION - AUTONOMOUS TECHNOLOGY GRANTS - ONE-TIME FUNDING - REPORT
TO LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT.**

1. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of ~~\$750,000~~ \$500,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, to the department of career and technical education for the purpose of providing autonomous technology grants to a workforce training center serving the northwest area of the state for providing workforce training to address workforce shortages in the state, including shortages in the oil and gas industry for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The funding provided in this section is considered a one-time funding item.
2. For purposes of this section, autonomous technology includes uncrewed aircraft systems; autonomous vehicles; or other autonomous systems, processes, or technologies.
3. The department of career and technical education shall develop an application process and guidelines for the grants, including eligibility criteria, matching requirements, eligible uses of grant funding, and maximum grant awards. To be eligible for a grant, a workforce training center shall certify to the department of career

1 and technical education that the operation of the autonomous technology is related to
2 workforce training to address workforce shortages in the state, including shortages in
3 the oil and gas industry. The department of career and technical education may
4 require a workforce training center to provide one dollar of matching funds for every
5 four dollars awarded by the state. A workforce training center may use grant funding
6 for education or training curriculum expenses related to autonomous technology,
7 autonomous technology operations, contracting for services related to autonomous
8 technology, or other eligible uses as determined by the department of career and
9 technical education.

- 10 4. During the 2025-26 interim, the department of career and technical education shall
11 provide at least one report to the legislative management regarding the grants,
12 including a list of grant recipients, the amounts awarded, and a description of the use
13 of the grant funding.

14 **SECTION 3. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES -**
15 **AUTONOMOUS TECHNOLOGY GRANTS - ONE-TIME FUNDING - REPORT TO**
16 **LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT.**

- 17 1. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not
18 otherwise appropriated, the sum of ~~\$750,000~~\$250,000, or so much of the sum as may
19 be necessary, to the department of health and human services for the purpose of
20 providing autonomous technology grants to individuals or entities that aid the functions
21 and operations of rural emergency response and disaster mitigation, for the biennium
22 beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The funding provided in this
23 section is considered a one-time funding item.
- 24 2. For purposes of this section, autonomous technology includes uncrewed aircraft
25 systems; autonomous vehicles; or other autonomous systems, processes, or
26 technologies.
- 27 3. The department of health and human services shall develop an application process
28 and guidelines for the grants, including eligibility criteria, matching requirements,
29 eligible uses of grant funding, and maximum grant awards. To be eligible for a grant,
30 an individual or entity shall certify to the department of health and human services that
31 the operation of the autonomous technology is related to aiding the functions and

1 operations of rural emergency response and disaster mitigation. The department of
2 health and human services may require an individual or entity to provide one dollar of
3 matching funds for every four dollars awarded by the state. An individual or entity may
4 use grant funding for autonomous technology operations, contracting for services
5 related to autonomous technology, or other eligible uses as determined by the
6 department of health and human services.

- 7 4. During the 2025-26 interim, the department of health and human services shall
8 provide at least one report to the legislative management regarding the grants,
9 including a list of grant recipients, the amounts awarded, and a description of the use
10 of the grant funding.

11 **SECTION 4. APPROPRIATION - AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER - AUTONOMOUS**
12 **TECHNOLOGY GRANTS - ONE-TIME FUNDING - REPORT TO LEGISLATIVE**
13 **MANAGEMENT.**

- 14 1. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not
15 otherwise appropriated, the sum of ~~\$750,000~~ \$500,000, or so much of the sum as may
16 be necessary, to the agriculture commissioner for the purpose of providing
17 autonomous technology grants to individuals or entities in the agriculture industry, for
18 the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The funding provided
19 in this section is considered a one-time funding item.
- 20 2. For purposes of this section, autonomous technology includes uncrewed aircraft
21 systems; autonomous vehicles; or other autonomous systems, processes, or
22 technologies.
- 23 3. The agriculture commissioner shall develop an application process and guidelines for
24 the grants, including eligibility criteria, matching requirements, eligible uses of grant
25 funding, and maximum grant awards. To be eligible for a grant, an individual or entity
26 shall certify to the agriculture commissioner that the operation of the autonomous
27 technology is related to the inspection, operation, maintenance, or construction of
28 agriculture property or infrastructure. The agriculture commissioner may require an
29 individual or entity to provide one dollar of matching funds for every four dollars
30 awarded by the state. An individual or entity may use grant funding for autonomous

1 technology operations, contracting for services related to autonomous technology, or
2 other eligible uses as determined by the agriculture commissioner.

3 4. During the 2025-26 interim, the agriculture commissioner shall provide at least one
4 report to the legislative management regarding the grants, including a list of grant
5 recipients, the amounts awarded, and a description of the use of the grant funding.

6 **SECTION 5. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES -**
7 **AUTONOMOUS TECHNOLOGY GRANTS - ONE-TIME FUNDING - REPORT TO**
8 **LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT.**

9 1. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not
10 otherwise appropriated, the sum of ~~\$750,000~~ \$250,000, or so much of the sum as may
11 be necessary, to the department of emergency services for the purpose of providing
12 autonomous technology grants to individuals or entities that monitor the United States
13 highway 2 corridor within the state to assist local and state law enforcement agencies,
14 for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The funding
15 provided in this section is considered a one-time funding item.

16 2. For purposes of this section, autonomous technology includes uncrewed aircraft
17 systems; autonomous vehicles; or other autonomous systems, processes, or
18 technologies.

19 3. The department of emergency services shall develop an application process and
20 guidelines for the grants, including eligibility criteria, matching requirements, eligible
21 uses of grant funding, and maximum grant awards. To be eligible for a grant, an
22 individual or entity shall certify to the department of emergency services that the
23 operation of the autonomous technology is related to monitoring the United States
24 highway 2 corridor within the state to assist local and state law enforcement agencies.
25 The department of emergency services may require an individual or entity to provide
26 one dollar of matching funds for every four dollars awarded by the state. An individual
27 or entity may use grant funding for autonomous technology operations, contracting for
28 services related to autonomous technology, or other eligible uses as determined by
29 the department of emergency services.

30 4. During the 2025-26 interim, the department of emergency services shall provide at
31 least one report to the legislative management regarding the grants, including a list of

1 grant recipients, the amounts awarded, and a description of the use of the grant
2 funding.

3 **SECTION 6. LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT STUDY - AUTONOMOUS TECHNOLOGY.**

4 During the 2025-26 interim, the legislative management shall consider studying the costs and
5 benefits of investing in autonomous technology infrastructure in the state. The study must
6 include an analysis of the industries using autonomous technology, future industries that may
7 use autonomous technology, the economic impact of autonomous technology, and the return on
8 investment to the state. The legislative management shall report its findings and
9 recommendations, together with any legislation required to implement the recommendations, to
10 the seventieth legislative assembly.