

2025 HOUSE TRANSPORTATION

HB 1327

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Transportation Committee
Room JW327E, State Capitol

HB 1327
2/7/2025

Relating to special plates for amateur radio station license holders.

10:47 a.m. Chairman D. Ruby opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman D. Ruby, Vice Chairman Grueneich, Representatives Christianson, Dressler, Frelich, Hendrix, Johnston, Kasper, Koppelman, Maki, Morton, Osowski, Schatz
Members Absent: Representative Finley-DeVill

Discussion Topics:

- Emergency role

10:48 a.m. Representative Jared Hendrix introduced the bill and submitted testimony #39522.

10:55 a.m. Kaelan Akvik, amateur radio station license holder, testified in favor and submitted testimony #35990.

Additional written testimony:

Robert Anderson submitted testimony in favor #36070.

11:02 a.m. Chairman D. Ruby closed the hearing.

Janae Pinks, Committee Clerk

Hello,

My name is Kaelan Akvik and I would like to write to express my approval for HB 1327 relating to the changes for Amateur Radio License Plates.

I am a General Class license holder under the callsign KOAKV. To a radio operator, their callsign is sometimes wider known than their own name. The ability to display this callsign on a license plate is a point of pride that some operators choose to take part in.

This bill looks to alleviate two of the most common frustrations when it comes to callsign plates. Only allowing one plate/vehicle to hold the callsign, and no designated markings on the plate to signify that the text is related to Amateur Radio.

I am the Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) Coordinator for Richland County, ND. Any ARES member across the state, or nation for that matter, can be deployed after a catastrophic event to assist in communication needs that arise. For the possibility of needing a mobile command post, I purchased a retired ambulance from a local fire department and retrofitted it for use at a communications center. This vehicle proudly displays my callsign on the license plate.

The fact that this vehicle uses that plate means I am not able to have that callsign with a variation without it becoming a vanity plate, incurring additional costs. This bill would allow more than one vehicle to proudly display what operators hold dear.

Other states who have special plates for Amateur Radio License Holders do use the words "Amateur Radio" on them in some fashion, and it greatly increases visibility into this hobby and can create more licensed operators.

Thank you,

Kaelan Akvik

KOAKV

{"bgColorIndex":0,"textColorIndex":0,"note":"The bill as now written does not stipulate the number of letters and characters that can be placed on the license plate. Currently Amateur Radio call signs can have between 4 and 6 letters and numbers. If you limit the number of character to 7, as it currently, this will keep the largest number of Amateur Radio Licensees from applying for this plate format. This is assuming that your intention is to add a 2 through -5 to the Call Sign. I am assuming, in my case, it would be W0OVX-2. But my previous call sign would be KE0OVX-2, which is 8 characters and currently you are limited to 7 characters.\n\nAny chance of stipulating 8 characters be added to a plate?\n\nRobert M Anderson\n10120 111th Ave SE\nMinot, ND 58701"}

From: Hendrix, Jared <jhendrix@ndlegis.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 9:21 AM
To: -Grp-NDLA House Transportation <ndlahtransp@ndlegis.gov>
Subject: Amateur Radio HB 1327 Information

Amateur Radio License Plates

What is Amateur Radio?

Many people think amateur Radio means short-wave radio. And to some extent it does. However, Amateur Radio (ham)radio operators also communicate locally, primarily through FM frequencies allocated by the FCC. All amateur radio operators are licensed by the Federal Communications Commission after rigorous testing. Amateur radio operators are often known as “hams”.

Is Amateur Radio, the same thing as Citizens Band (CB) radio?

No. Citizens band radio is limited to 40 specific channels or frequencies. CB is also limited by the FCC to only 4 Watts of power and only on local AM or FM. Amateur Radio can transmit with as high as 1500 Watts, although we seldom need to use that much power.

What else is unique about Amateur Radio?

The list is almost endless. Locally, most amateurs communicate through UHF FM and VHF FM frequencies through a “repeater”. A repeater re-transmits the signal instantaneously. It is usually on a tower or high building (or a mountain where they exist), and repeaters allow the radio operator to transmit over many miles. For example, the repeater for the Jamestown radio club can communicate almost to Valley City to the east and to past Steele to the west. The location of the Jamestown repeater is actually in Cleveland, ND.

Most repeaters have backup power. The Fargo amateur radio club, for example, is on top of a dormitory at MSUM and it's hooked up to the university's backup generator. Some repeater facilities have solar panels and batteries. This allows them to communicate, even if there's no electrical power available. Likewise, many individual hams have a personal power supply that's independent of the grid.

Amateur radio operators are forbidden to use the service for any commercial purpose and all radios, repeaters, and other equipment are provided either through donations or through the personal expense of individual hams. Hams cannot receive any payment for their public radio service, per FCC rules.

Can amateur radio operators talk over long distances?

Yes and no. There are three levels of Amateur Radio licensure. The first level, Technician, allows, for the most part, only UHF and VHF communications. Whereas the next two levels, General and Amateur Extra, can communicate over high frequency (short-wave). Depending upon the ionospheric conditions, it is common for amateur operators to talk across the state and across the world. If the conditions are not ideal, digital communications can often cut through the interference and still get messages out.

Emergency Services of Amateur Radio

Amateur radio operators, either individually or as an organized group, have been essential in many disasters, including those in North Dakota. North Dakota has a state organization called ARES, Amateur Radio Emergency Services. It is a volunteer service to assist in an organized manner in times of emergency. A few examples come to mind.

- In 1995 the main telephone trunk line was cut by a criminal in order to rob a local store. Most service in the Red River Valley was inoperable for days and even weeks in some areas. Cell service was in its infancy, but it was also inoperable. Amateur communications assisted in local communications and assisted with public service needs.

- In 1997 the Red River Valley was ravaged by a flood and the cell service crashed for a while. Again, the local hams helped out with communications in Fargo, Grand Fords and elsewhere in the Red River Valley.
- The Souris Valley Amateur Radio Club set up a station at the Red Cross evacuation center, located at the Minot City Auditorium to assist with emergency needs in 2011.
- Sanford, Essentia, Altru and possibly other hospitals in the state have an FM Amateur radio in them for a back up communication system in the event of an emergency. These radios are not provided by the hospitals, but rather by local clubs or individual hams. The local Fargo AREA provides backup service for FM ambulance in the event their systems fail, which happened six or seven years ago. The hams in Fargo were asked to standby in the event FM Ambulance was needed. The hospitals and ambulance services have hams on staff who are licensed to use the radios.
- It is not unusual for local hams to be called upon to track storms and even spot tornadoes.
- Some hams are part of MARS. MARS stands for Military Auxiliary Radio System, a program that trains civilian amateur radio operators to support the United States Department of Defense. Other hams participate in MARS drills even if not formally part of the MARS program. This is done only on “short-wave” frequencies.

Elsewhere, AREA has mobilized with floods along the Mississippi, the tornado in Joplin, MO in 2011, volcanic eruptions in Hawaii, fires in California, and in all cases they work with local law enforcement and fire authorities as well as provide a means of communications to family and friends during those trying times.

In addition to local FM communications, hams often set up in command centers around the country and around the world to communicate with the outside world when communications with the area is cut off.

Community Service

Because local Amateur Radio clubs and individuals also assist in various local endeavors. A few examples and there are others around the state.

- Because Amateur Radio can cover a large area we are asked each year to provide communication for the Fargo Marathon. Why not just use cell phone, one may ask? The answer is that there are as many as 20 aid stations with amateur radios manned by licensed hams. When there is a need at one place, every ham hears it at the same time as well as the “control operator” located at the race headquarters. The needs might be as simple as a need for more water, or perhaps an injury, or once a parent got separated from a child. Every ham was aware and on the lookout.
- We have staffed communications for the Rotary Bike Ride in Cass County ND and Clay County MN. Again, we work as a team as we can each hear any needs that come up. A few years ago, a station reported that a cyclist did not pass a certain checkpoint. Word went out by Amateur Radio. Several hams got in their cars and searched roads near the last location. Finally, the lost bike rider was found by a ham, safe and sound, after he simply made a wrong turn and got lost.
- Similar communication takes place at other events around the state.

Amateur License Plates

Most states recognize the value of Amateur Radio and make special license plates available for hams. These usually have the words “Amateur Radio”, “Ham Radio”, “Emergency Services” or some similar logo on them. Some states also have a symbol of amateur radio, such as a radio tower. However, all of the states that issue such plates have the car owner’s “call sign”. This is assigned by the FCC when a license is granted. A call sign must be used on the air every 10 minutes of transmission by a ham. The call sign identifies a person as an Amateur Radio Operator. In the United States, the call sign always has three to five letters and one number in the middle.

There are a number of reasons for having License Plates with call signs on them and this is recognized by North Dakota by issuing license plates for hams. In an emergency situation, fire and law enforcement can identify a ham operator.

So why the change?

Most hams have radios in all of their cars and trucks. North Dakota law currently provides for only one car per ham having an amateur license plate.

Many states, including neighboring Minnesota, Tennessee, and others recognize this and allow multiple cars owned by a ham to have the same call sign with an appended number for the second, third, etc cars.

Many state civil authorities may not recognize the amateur license plate as it is currently produced by North Dakota. Having the words "Amateur Radio" on the plate makes it very easy for law enforcement, fire, and other civil authorities to recognize a car licensed to a ham and would facilitate entry to restricted areas in the case of an emergency. Having the appended number added to the call sign for additional cars allows for easier emergency access and recognition of whichever vehicle the multiple car owner drives.

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Transportation Committee Room JW327E, State Capitol

HB 1327
2/7/2025

Relating to special plates for amateur radio station licenseholders.
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11:27 a.m. Chairman D. Ruby opened the meeting.

Members Present: Chairman D. Ruby, Vice Chairman Grueneich, Representatives Christianson, Dressler, Finley-DeVille, Frelich, Johnston, Hendrix, Kasper, Koppelman, Maki, Morton, Osowski, Schatz

Discussion Topics:

- Committee action

11:28 a.m. Vice Chairman Grueneich moved a Do Pass.

11: 28 a.m. Representative Morton seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Dan Ruby	Y
Representative Jim Grueneich	Y
Representative Nels Christianson	Y
Representative Ty Dressler	Y
Representative Lisa Finley-DeVille	Y
Representative Kathy Frelich	Y
Representative Jared Hendrix	Y
Representative Daniel Johnston	Y
Representative Jim Kasper	Y
Representative Ben Koppelman	Y
Representative Roger A. Maki	Y
Representative Desiree Morton	Y
Representative Doug Osowski	Y
Representative Mike Schatz	Y

11:29 a.m. Motion passed 14-0-0.

11:29 a.m. Representative Hendrix will carry the bill.

11:30 a.m. Chairman D. Ruby adjourned the meeting.

Janae Pinks, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HB 1327 ([25.0773.03000](#))

Transportation Committee (Rep. D. Ruby, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (14 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1327 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2025 SENATE TRANSPORTATION

HB 1327

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Transportation Committee Fort Totten Room, State Capitol

HB 1327 10:04 AM
3/6/2025

A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 39-04-10 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to special plates for amateur radio station licenseholders.

10:04 a.m. Chairman Clemens opened the hearing.

Members present: Chairman Clemens, Vice Chairwoman Cory, Senator Hogan, Senator Klein, Senator Paulson, Senator Rummel

Discussion Topics:

- Wording and design of special plates
- Cost of purchasing special plates

10:05 a.m. Representative Hendrix, District 10, introduced HB 1327, testified in favor and submitted testimony #39227.

10:12 a.m. Brad Schaffer, Driver's License Director, NDDOT, testified neutral.

Additional written testimony:

Representative Maki, District 26, submitted written testimony in favor #39166.

10:19 a.m. Chairman Clemens closed the hearing.

Chance Anderson, Committee Clerk

CHAIRMAN CLEMENS AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE.

HB 1327 SHOULD BE A DO PASS BILL, IF WE HAVE A
DISASTER AND HELP IS NEEDED.

THE FIRST THING I LOOK FOR IS WHO CAN HELP IN THIS
SITUATION.

HAVING THE PLATE TELLING THEY HAVE THE
CAPABILITY TO CONTACT HELP OTHER THEN CELL
SERVICE.

GOOD TO KNOW WHO CAN HELP IN TIME OF NEED.

PLEASE PASS HB 1327

OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE.

THANK YOU, CHAIRMAN CLEMENS AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE.

REPRESENTATIVE MAKI DISTRICT 26

Amateur Radio License Plates

Amateur Radio (ham) radio operators also communicate locally, primarily through FM frequencies allocated by the FCC. All operators are licensed by the Federal Communications Commission after rigorous testing. Most amateurs communicate through UHF FM and VHF FM frequencies through a “repeater” which re-transmits the signal instantaneously. It is usually on a tower or high building (or a mountain), and allows transmission over many miles. Most repeaters have backup power and many individual hams have a personal power supply that’s independent of the grid, making this technology ideal in the midst of a disaster.

This technology has been used successfully in many different situations. In 1997, the Red River Valley was ravaged by a flood and the cell service crashed for a while, and hams helped out with communications in the Red River Valley. Sanford, Essentia, and other hospitals have an FM Amateur radio in them for a back up communication system in the event of an emergency. These radios are not provided by the hospitals, but rather by local clubs or individual hams. The local Fargo ARES, Amateur Radio Emergency Services provides backup service for ambulances in the event their systems fail.

There are three levels of Amateur Radio licensure through the FCC, and two of levels allow communication over high frequency (short-wave). Depending upon the ionospheric conditions, it is common for amateur operators to talk across the state and the world. They can even talk to the International Space Station.

Most states recognize the value of Amateur Radio and make special license plates available for hams. These usually have the words “Amateur Radio”, “Ham Radio”, “Emergency Services” or some similar logo on them. All of the states that issue such places have the car owner’s “call sign”. This is assigned by the FCC when a license is granted. A call sign must be used on the air every 10 minutes of transmission by a ham. The call sign identifies a person as an Amateur Radio Operator. In the United States, the call sign always has three to five letters and one number in the middle.

Most hams have radios in all of their cars and trucks. North Dakota law currently provides for only one car per ham having an amateur license plate.

Many states allow multiple cars owned by a ham to have the same call sign with an appended number for the second, third, etc cars. Having the words “Amateur Radio” on the plate makes it very easy for law enforcement, fire, and other civil authorities to recognize a car licensed to a ham and would facilitate entry to restricted areas in the case of an emergency. There is no cost to taxpayers for this bill, and upon talking with DOT, this bill creates no problems in the manufacture of our license plates.

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Transportation Committee Fort Totten Room, State Capitol

HB 1327 11:13 AM
3/6/2025

A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 39-04-10 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to special plates for amateur radio station licenseholders.

11:13 a.m. Chairman Clemens opened the hearing.

Members present: Chairman Clemens, Vice Chairwoman Cory, Senator Hogan, Senator Klein, Senator Paulson, Senator Rummel

Discussion Topics:

- Fee structure of special plates

11:15 a.m. Brad Schaffer, Driver's License Director, NDDOT, answered committee questions.

11:19 a.m. Senator Paulson moved a Do Pass.

11:20 a.m. Senator Klein seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator David A. Clemens	Y
Senator Claire Cory	N
Senator Kathy Hogan	AB
Senator Jerry Klein	Y
Senator Bob Paulson	Y
Senator Dean Rummel	N

Motion passed 3-2-1.

Chairman Clemens will carry the bill.

11:22 a.m. Chairman Clemens closed the hearing.

Chance Anderson, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HB 1327 ([25.0773.03000](#))

Transportation Committee (Sen. Clemens, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (3 YEAS, 2 NAYS, 1 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1327 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.