

2025 SENATE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

SB 2332

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

State and Local Government Committee Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2332
2/7/2025

Relating to a legacy earnings emergency services and public safety fund and advisory board; and to the allocation of legacy fund earnings; and to provide a continuing appropriation.

Members Present: Chairman Roers; Vice Chair Castaneda; Senators: Barta, Braunberger, Lee and Walen.

9:58 a.m. Chair Roers called the hearing to order.

Discussion Topics:

- Collaboration between communities
- Recruiting and retaining first responders
- Expanding emergency services
- Modernizing public safety technology

9:58 a.m. Senator Boschee, District 44, introduced the bill and submitted testimony #36146.

10:15 a.m. Bill Kalanek, CEO APT Government Relations Public Affairs, testified in favor.

10:18 a.m. Matt Gardner, Executive Director League of Cities, testified in favor.

10:20 a.m. Donnell Presky, Government and Public Affairs Specialist ND Association of Counties, testified in favor.

10:21 a.m. Travis Bateman, Director Badlands Search and Rescue, testified in favor and submitted testimony #36100.

10:30 a.m. Sarah Miller, President/Public Safety Telecommunication Director/911 Coordinator, testified in favor and submitted testimony #36125.

10:39 a.m. Ben Gates, Emergency Manager Steel County, testified in favor and submitted testimony #35975.

Additional written testimony:

Megan Langley, citizen, submitted testimony in favor #35858.

Ken Wangen, Chief Carrington Fire and Rescue, submitted testimony in favor #36088.

10:45 a.m. Chair Roers closed the hearing.

Susan Helbling, Committee Clerk

Chair Roers and Members of the Committee,

My name is Megan Langley, and I serve as the Executive Director of Strengthen ND, an organization dedicated to empowering rural communities across North Dakota through strategic investment, capacity-building, and storytelling. I appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 2332.

SB 2332 represents a crucial step forward in ensuring the safety, stability, and sustainability of rural North Dakota. By establishing the Legacy Earnings Emergency Services and Public Safety Fund, this bill acknowledges a long-standing reality that many of our rural communities face—limited resources for emergency response, a dwindling workforce in emergency services, and increasing pressure on local governments to do more with less.

In too many of our small towns, fire and emergency medical services rely on dedicated but overburdened volunteers. These individuals answer the call at all hours, often traveling significant distances to provide lifesaving care. However, without sustainable funding, we risk losing these essential services entirely. SB 2332 takes a forward-thinking approach by ensuring a dedicated set-aside from the Legacy Fund earnings to support emergency services. This funding will allow communities to recruit and retain first responders, modernize equipment, improve communication infrastructure, and ensure that every North Dakotan—no matter where they live—can rely on timely emergency response.

At Strengthen ND, we work closely with rural communities to develop strategies for economic resilience, and time and again, we hear that one of the biggest challenges is the uncertainty around emergency services funding. A crisis should not be the moment we realize our communities are unprepared. Instead, we must proactively invest in emergency response systems to safeguard our residents and ensure a high quality of life in rural areas.

For these reasons, I urge this committee to support SB 2332. This bill is not just about financial allocations—it is about the safety and future of our rural communities. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Megan Langley
(701) 303-0840
megan@strengthennd.com

**TESTIMONY OF
BEN GATES
EMERGENCY MANAGER
STEELE COUNTY
BEFORE THE 69TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION
SENATE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 7, 2025
IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 2332**

Chairman Roers, Vice Chair Castaneda and members of the Committee. My name is Ben Gates and I'm the Director of Emergency Management in Steele County. In addition to my full-time duties in Steele County, I am also the Assistant Emergency Manager in Traill County, and I am the current President of the North Dakota Emergency Management Association (NDEMA). I have also had the pleasure of serving my home and work communities as an active Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). I come to you today to testify in support of SB 2332.

I would like to thank Senator Boschee for reaching out to myself and many others about the possibility of a bill like this. Our discussions centered around the idea of approving funding towards our primarily rural jurisdictions with the intent of recruiting and retaining qualified personnel in those first responder communities. The bill seeks to provide funding in a grant style format to address this issue and many others. There have been horror stories coming out across the State about emergency services being unable to respond to 911 calls because they don't have the staff, the distance is too far, or their equipment has failed. We have aged emergency services throughout the State – both in actual age and in equipment age and our rural agencies don't have the capacity to handle the needed upgrades.

Both Traill County and Steele County have been subject to a decline in volunteer responders throughout our emergency services network. Steele County alone plays host to three (3) fire departments (Sharon Fire Department, Finley Fire Department, and Hope Fire Department) and 1.5 EMS services (Hope Ambulance covering the southern half of the County, and West Traill Ambulance Service that comes from Mayville to cover the northern half of the County).

Sharon Fire Department is closing with the final paperwork to be submitted to the State Fire Marshall's Office by the end of March 2025. With this closure, the City of Sharon and the surrounding Townships are now going to have to rely on the services of Finley Fire

Department. Although Finley Fire Department is only 9 miles away from the City of Sharon, the effects of this closure are widespread. As another department closes, some other department must pick up the coverage area, fire district and other emergency services lines must be redrawn, and the citizens of the City of Sharon and the surrounding Townships no longer have that immediate reaction and response in the event of an emergency. The department closing is a direct result of the lack of volunteers.

Both the Finley Fire Department and Hope Fire Department have also felt the impact of low volunteer numbers. We have members in each of those departments that have been part of the department for over 50 years. We are lacking in the younger generation. Active members of each department are around 10 per department with the average years of service of those departments around 15 years. This means that our older generation are still part of the volunteer community, and we are not supplementing this generation with the younger generation as is needed to maintain the departments.

In addition to the fire departments, we are running into the same problems with our emergency medical services (EMS). This problem is exaggerated that in order to provide patient care, an individual must be an Emergency Medical Responder (EMR), an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), an Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT), or a Paramedic. Each of these certifications require a minimum number of hours of training and education along with ride-along style trainings to ensure that the new medical provider is competent in their certification. Now the certification needs for each level of medical provider is not the purview of this bill; however, it takes some time to obtain any of these certification levels. EMR is approximately 4-6 months of additional training, EMT and AEMT are 6-10 months, and a Paramedic certification is at least 12-18 months. It is a major time commitment to be part of the EMS community and its no wonder that more people aren't willing to take these courses. Most EMS agencies do not have the resources to send any interested member to the proper training and education needed for any type of certification. NDHHS has done a good job of securing funding to help offset some of these courses with a reimbursement grant for agencies that are sending their people to these trainings; however, once these people come back to serve their communities, a lot of them are doing it for no pay at all.

Law enforcement is a large piece of the public safety community. As a previous Alderman for the City of Mayville, I know firsthand the funding needs to be able to provide law enforcement services within the City. About 15 years ago, the City of Mayville made the decision to move law enforcement services to the County. With this move came an obvious funding discussion. In the last 5 years alone, the City of Mayville has spent \$1,137,094 on law enforcement services, broken down below by year:

- 2020 - \$201,532 – 51% of the City's general fund budget
- 2021 - \$203,781- 48% of the City's general fund budget
- 2022 - \$256,391 – 56% of the City's general fund budget
- 2023 - \$184,210 – 50% of the City's general fund budget
- 2024 - \$291,180 – 57% of the City's general fund budget

Law enforcement is needed, and the expenses associated with this are warranted. The City of Mayville holds exactly 18% of the Traill County Sheriff's Office total budget. With this funding, we receive at least 1, usually 2 deputies that live within the City, and the commitment from the Sheriff's Office that a deputy will be patrolling the City every night.

The funding is an important and necessary piece of this legislation, as it is in most pieces of legislation. I believe there is room for negotiation for the funding needs, both along the lines of additional funding and the reduction of the funding request. If approved, grants can be awarded to communities like the City of Sharon to keep their fire department operating to properly serve their community. Grants could go to EMS agencies like the Hope Ambulance Service to send their people to EMR, EMT, AEMT, or Paramedic courses and pay them some type of stipend when they return from these courses to help offset their time commitment. Grants could go to places like the City of Mayville to help offset property tax increases to maintain law enforcement services in the City.

I will end with one final note – we in the rural emergency services world need your help and attention. We need your help to ensure that our emergency services continue to withstand the test of time. I look forward to working with you on this bill and any amendments that may arise. Thank you for your time today, any questions can be directed to me at the information below.



Ben Gates
Director, Emergency Management
Steele County
Cell: 701-270-1738
Email: bgates@nd.gov

Senate State and Local Government

Date 2/7/2025.

Testimony on Senate Bill 2332

Submitted by: Ken Wangen, Fire Chief Carrington Volunteer Fire and Rescue

Chairwoman Roers and the Senate State and Local Government Committee

I want to thank you for considering Senate Bill 2332.

Finding a way to help all our public safety and emergency services in the state of North Dakota needs to be priority one, if you travel the state there is a chance you would need one or all these services if something was to go wrong.

Here is an excerpt from Firehouse Magazine

How do you operate a fire department on \$10,000 a year with half of the money eaten up by insurance?" That was the lament of the chief of a small fire department as he leaned against the second-hand 1970s-era truck, its once-gleaming paint having long ago lost its luster, a puddle underneath evidencing a water tank that was ready to give out. Beside the old engine in its death throes sat a functional volunteer-built wildfire unit sporting military drab for paint, one of the many government-surplus vehicles handed down to needy fire departments.

This was written in 2003, 22 years ago, yet in my travels throughout the state conducting trainings that very scenario is prevalent today.

The situation has not gotten better, in many ways it has gotten worse. Basic new fire trucks have seen extreme increases in prices. In 2000 a truck that cost \$200,000 with equipment now is being quoted at \$600,000 with no equipment. A water tanker bought in 2014 cost \$230,000, today costs \$407,000. Grass units are the same story. Regardless of the type if I was to sign an agreement for a new truck today it would be a minimum of 2 ½ years before I could expect delivery.

In 2020 the used equipment market went nuts; all used apparatus seen upwards 50% increases. Apparatus 10 years old or less almost became nonexistent, when they do come up you need to be ready to buy in short order. This issue happened because availability of new chassis, prolonged deliveries, and prolonged cycles for departments to replace their units took the supply and demand ratio through the roof in the wrong direction for Fire Departments. We have tried to enter negotiations on 2 used trucks only to find out they were sold.

Of the trucks I listed none are a luxury, they are the basic configurations needed by all fire departments to meet NFPA standard and ISO 9 the minimum requirements for the Certificate of Existence all North Dakota Fire Departments file.

Nothing has gotten cheaper turnout (the protective gear we wear), air packs, keeping the lights on, paying insurances, paying fuel bills and everything that is required to simply operate an entity and meet a minimum standard. Don't get me started on SIRM capable radios but again another increased cost and in this case a expenditure many will not be able to utilize for what another 1 to 3 years. Let's not forget pagers as Rural Fire Departs must have paging to meet the minimum standards. The pager to phone apps do not comply, NFPA standards clearly states primary notification cannot have the internet as part of the transmission circuit. So, we will need to add pager to the mix of expenses we will also see.

I would love to say this is not happening in North Dakota, but it is. As North Dakotans we are resourceful and often find ways, often trading reliability and safety for something that works. We will make do is often heard and something is better than nothing is the prevailing attitude, we can do better. For the safety of firefighter and the public we need to do better.

Having a grant fund available and forward thinking would be a vital injection to stretched budgets that often have to make the decision of paying utility bills vs. costs that train, improve services and make it safer for all involved.

We are seeing an epidemic in North Dakota and the nation concerning Public Safety and Emergency Service struggling to survive let alone better serve the public. Since the last legislative session we have lost 5 Fire Departments. That means people with those areas now have longer wait times and the remaining departments have increase coverage pressures.

The one key component is personnel. volunteer, full time paid staff it doesn't matter. Public Safety is seeing a reduction in applicants throughout all 3 legs of public safety (Law Enforcement, EMS and Fire). Why is this happening? As volunteers time commitment, increase training, unknown schedule of need would be the most often answer given. But it is more complicated than that. Draws on our time have multiplied with kids in activities/sports, other community organizations, you name it if it takes your time, you must give up somewhere. Full time jobs expect more because of pressures. For the full time staffed departments it often falls back on pay and benefits.

For volunteer base organizations you add the business aspect as well as the operational. If they can't meet budgets, they end up having fund raisers (negotiating the web of restrictions now in place to do it legally), pancake feeds, fill the boot campaigns all of this takes up time and most do it willingly but we do something for free and must also give more time so it can continue to exist. If not, we must choose between bad and worse decisions of not replacing outdate equipment, not having training or in some cases paying out of pocket for either. Don't get me wrong the true volunteer will do it because it is our passion to serve and provide but that only goes so far.

This bill is a great first step to help us solve the money aspects that should allow for innovated ways to bring in the volunteers. Please give it a do pass.

Ken Wangen

Fire Chief Carrington Fire and Rescue

TO: NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATURE-69TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION

RE: **TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SENATE BILL 2332**

2/7/2025

Madam Chair Roers, Vice Chairman Castaneda, and committee members,

Good morning, my name is Travis Bateman and I represent the Badlands Search & Rescue (SAR) Service along with the Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota (SARVAND). I submit to you this testimony in full support and **in favor** of Senate Bill 2332. Our two organizations are based out of Watford City and available to any agencies in the state to assist them. We have also provided assistance to eastern Montana agencies. Our team has 16 members residing across western North Dakota in Watford City, Bismarck, Dickinson, Minot and Williston at this time.

Badlands SAR was founded in 2018 and since then has developed a membership of knowledgeable volunteers trained in search and rescue skills such as incident management and support, ground search, lost person behavior, sign cutting, mantrailing, outdoor survival and safety, water operations-including side scan sonar, and unmanned aerial vehicles.

SARVAND was founded in 2023 as an organization to develop and establish state standards and training for North Dakota much along the same lines as what the North Dakota Firefighters Association does for the fire service.



Renee Arcand Search, Dawson County, MT on Yellowstone River – Searching flood debris.

Our members come from all backgrounds like any other volunteer organization. We are trained volunteers that aim to bring a skillset upon an incident so as to work towards an organized, unified, and active effort for the mission at hand. The difference with SAR incidents as compared to other emergencies is that often times, those needing help are well off any accessible roadway, they're in the water, out on the ice, and most critical....their true and exact location is unknown and they first have to be sought for and located in order to perform rescue or medical care. We do not charge for our services.

Our organizations are unique in the fact that we are not political subdivisions. We are entirely nonprofit and rely on donations and grants in order to survive. That in itself has proven to be a large challenge as it has never brought about any reliable, consistent, or steady stream of funding to operate.

Members also respond in their own vehicles, purchase their own fuel, packs, food, and other essentials to respond and operate. Members in past operations have also purchased fuel for our boats, food for the team, and even emergency repair costs to one of our boats during a mission as we did not have the funds on hand as an organization but our team was still there and ready to help and we were not going to be deterred by mechanical issues.



Dawson County, Montana Base Camp – Search for Renee Arcand on Yellowstone River.

We currently follow the standards and training set by the National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR) and have also begun to adopt and develop training standards, to include certification, based off of models set by other states that have had true SAR programs in their respective areas for years or even decades. We have fundraised and held a week long SAR Conference for two years now to network and further advance our skills, invite and train with law enforcement agencies, and SAR personnel from across the nation. It is an immense task to host such an event but the benefits are absolutely priceless in terms of what is learned, gained, developed, and experienced.

All training and certification courses have a cost. There is the course and testing fees, and of course the travel, lodging, and meal expenses. Again, all of which fall on the individual volunteer member. While this has been accepted by most members, I can say that it has also kept us back from attaining certain skills as there comes a point where the price tag is simply too steep and we have no funding sources whatsoever to access from any government programs that exist as we are locked out for not being a government organization or political subdivision.

Senate Bill 2332 would certainly be a lifesaver for our organizations and what we are seeking to bring to the public safety field in North Dakota and in that, it will save lives by funding programs, training, equipment, and other needs that are currently not being met at any sustainable level.

I am also personally aware that many fire districts in our state are struggling with older equipment, or even outdated equipment. With the amount of technology and other advances available to today's emergency services, especially firefighters, sometimes that 1960 or 1970 model pickup used as a brush truck just doesn't cut it anymore when trucks of today are capable of having additional safety features, tech, and fire suppression gear equipped. The same can be said for larger apparatus, tenders, off-road vehicles, fire clothing, and radio communications. Even if a department has an older and still serviceable vehicle they wish to keep, there are always upgrades available but the cost is where the upgrade doesn't happen. LED lighting for scene illumination, thermal imagery, computer laptops to enhance mobile dispatch and information updates, mapping systems, and the list goes on.

Not to mention that many are starting to see their facilities reach or exceed their useful service life. Many fire stations were built in the 1970s or before and though maintained through the decades, there simply comes a time when new is needed. Fire trucks have grown larger, sometimes wider, and others longer. Just as tactics and techniques change over the years, so to do the needs of the facilities to house those newer age vehicles and gear.



National Night Out (public outreach) static display, Watford City, ND

Senate Bill 2332 would also create something in North Dakota that does not exist right now. A specific and dedicated funding source for volunteer emergency services and specifically for our volunteer response teams in fire/rescue, emergency medical services, and SAR. This is entirely doable and necessary in our organization's opinions, especially our's from the SAR side as we again, have no dedicated funding source whatsoever right now. I could give you a laundry list of what we need but I don't want any of you to require medical assistance here when you see the dollar signs and interrupt my podium time.

This is likely a large or no, this is an immense ask, but we believe it is doable with the funds that our state is generating with the Legacy Fund. The fund is about investments, right? To that I ask, is it ever a bad thing to invest in public safety? What is the price tag for a life saved or a community safeguarded with well trained, well equipped, and well prepared volunteers?

This legislature has a budget to adhere to every biennium and I understand that as of the end of January, the number of fiscal notes exceeds that in large form. However, in the coming weeks, you all will put your nose to the grindstone and grind away and by the end of this session, the dollars and funding will be devoted to this program and that program, this project and that one, this study and those agencies. And you all will go back to your respective areas of our state and continue on in your daily lives and occupations.



Lloyd Liken Search-Command Post-McCabe Church, Bismarck, ND

Much the same can be said for your volunteer emergency responder groups. Whether this fund comes to exist or not, they will still respond, train, and answer the calls that they do. Albeit, maybe a little less prepared as one might expect or a little less equipped. They may have to pool cash from their own crew to pay the insurance for that month, get the roof leak repaired, or purchase a computer program or app for them to operate more effectively, but they'll do it. And the Legacy Fund? Well, while those volunteers are pooling their personal funds together, that fund will keep on growing and growing and growing and be allocated in what ways are already determined, with plenty still remaining to help out us, the volunteer emergency responders.

So, I ask this of you today as we discuss this bill and you hear of needs and wants from the various programs, agencies, and walks of life through this session, again, what is the price today to you for a life saved or a community better safeguarded?

What is the price tag today to have a trained and certified search team available to spin up and deploy to search for a missing child or a missing elderly person in the dead of winter with mere hours to determine if that ends in a rescue, smiles, and joy....or a recovery, cries, and despair. For SAR incidents, that's how it truly is for these incident types right now. We need the help with funds. If we can get the funds, I can assure you all that our members will get the training, and gear, and we can further keep the grim reaper away. It's all about dollar signs and budgets here, we realize that. And those are tough choices to make.

But I can tell you as one that isn't in a state building in Bismarck wearing a suit and tie operating out of a climate-controlled office when incidents happen, whether its 30 below or 105 above outside that money is what handicaps us in the field trying to do the

work and see an incident through to the best outcome possible. It's the capable and willing boots on the ground that make it happen and we need the help with funding to be able to do so. The Legacy Fund has the monies and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. It would be a very wise investment to provide some to your emergency volunteer response organizations.



Ground Team, Physical Agility Test, Little Missouri National Grasslands, ND

And I would be remiss if I didn't mention other public safety teams and agencies that could likely use a boost in necessary funds for much needed equipment and other needs to fulfill their mandates of public safety. Technology continues to advance and it makes tasks safer and more effective when those technologies are available and not hours away but there in house. Local budget constraints are a real challenge for many, especially those outside of the oil patch. This bill could greatly aid those outside the patch that don't receive GPT funds or have the necessary income from maxed out mill levies.



North Dakota public safety has a great deal of needs. Not wants. Needs. 2332 could certainly help solve many of those. From the basic patrol or response vehicle replacement to adequate body armor, radio communications, drones and robotics, training for specialties to enhance emergency responses to specific incident types, force multipliers such as police K9s, investigative and evidence gathering tools, and the list certainly goes on. And it doesn't matter if someone is working in an area with a population of 500 or 15,000. The fact is, criminals and their acts don't discriminate and they routinely cross through those small and large jurisdictions. The biggest difference is whether or not an agency has the means to interdict them or not and when they don't, the eventuality is those criminals eventually do become their problem, ready or not. 2332 would offer a solution to become ready by a proactive means, rather than reactive.



This legislative session has several bills that are of related topics and I wish to highlight them to you so as to help in furtherance of consideration of 2332, two are specific to SAR incident types and one is specific to recruitment and retention of emergency volunteer responders.



Renee Arcand Search, Dawson County, MT on Yellowstone River – Caving Bank Hazards

Those are:

HB1199 to establish a missing and murdered indigenous persons database and task force,
HB1311 to request and fund a legislative study for the recruitment and retention of
volunteer emergency responders and,
HB1535 to establish a fourth missing person alert category for the public that is specific
for missing and endangered indigenous persons, called a Feather Alert. North Dakota has
three alerts currently, Amber, Silver, and Blue.

Please support organizations such as the two I represent but also those of our
fellow emergency responders in fire/rescue and emergency medical services. For the sake
of time here, to learn more about our organizations, please visit our website
(badlandsSAR.org) and you are more than welcome to reach out to me directly as well.

With that, I respectfully ask you for a Do Pass on 2332. Thank you for your
attention, your services as legislators, your time here today and I stand for any questions.

Respectfully,

/S/ *Travis F. Bateman*
Travis F. Bateman
Director / Founder
Badlands Search & Rescue
Search And Rescue Volunteer Association of North Dakota
(C)- 701.301.0899
(E)- badlandssarnd@gmail.com / sar4nd@gmail.com
(W)- www.badlandsSAR.org
(S) www.facebook.com/badlandsSAR



Missouri River Search for drowning victim utilizing boat and side scan sonar.

February 6th, 2025

Testimony in support of SB 2332

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today in support of Senate Bill 2332. My name is Sarah Miller, Public Safety Telecommunications Director and 911 Coordinator for Barnes County Dispatch and President of the North Dakota 911 Association. I have been serving this industry for 15 years in various roles such as Public Safety Telecommunicator, Public Safety Telecommunications Supervisor, Reserve Deputy, and Emergency Medical Technician.

I am here today in support of SB 2332 however I am requesting an amendment to the listed member organizations of the proposed advisory board to include the North Dakota 911 Association.

Public Safety Telecommunicators are the first link in the vital chain of emergency services provided to the public. We are the “FIRST” first responders and first point of contact for someone in an emergency. Our expertise, quick thinking, and ability to make split-second decisions under pressure literally mean the difference between someone living and someone dying.

A large part of a public safety telecommunicators’ duties is handling multiple emergencies simultaneously, providing coordination of responding agencies and keeping responders updated with real-time information. A dispatch center truly is the hub in which all responders originate their response from. Changes made to how our partner agencies respond – whether that be an EMS agency becoming unavailable for response or a fire department responding for a partner department can drastically affect the way public safety telecommunicators coordinate responders during an emergency response.

As written, all of our partner public safety services are represented on the advisory board. With the intended goals of this bill and 911 being the first pillar of public safety connections in an emergency, I feel that our organization, the North Dakota 911 Association, and the profession of Public Safety Telecommunications is a vital addition to the listed members of the emergency services and public safety advisory board.

Our organization is committed to promoting the professions in public safety services, continuing our partnership with our fellow first responders, and providing the highest level of service to the communities that depend on all of us, and we look forward to providing a representative to the advisory board.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Miller". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned below the "Thank you" text.

Sarah Miller
smiller@barnescounty.us

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

SENATE BILL NO. 2332

Introduced by

Senator Boschee

Representatives Brandenburg, Mitskog, Nelson

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 54-27 of the North Dakota
2 Century Code, relating to a legacy earnings emergency services and public safety fund and
3 advisory board; to amend and reenact section 21-10-13 of the North Dakota Century Code,
4 relating to the allocation of legacy fund earnings; and to provide a continuing appropriation.

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

6 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 21-10-13 of the North Dakota Century Code is
7 amended and reenacted as follows:

8 21-10-13. Legacy earnings fund - State treasurer - Transfers.

- 9 1. There is created in the state treasury the legacy earnings fund. The fund consists of all
10 moneys transferred to the fund under subsection 2 and all interest and earnings upon
11 moneys in the fund.
- 12 2. Any legacy fund earnings transferred to the general fund at the end of each biennium
13 in accordance with section 26 of article X of the Constitution of North Dakota must be
14 immediately transferred by the state treasurer to the legacy earnings fund.
- 15 3. For each biennium subsequent to the biennium in which the legacy fund earnings are
16 transferred under subsection 2, the amount available for appropriation from the legacy
17 earnings fund is seven percent of the five-year average value of the legacy fund
18 assets as reported by the state investment board. The average value of the legacy
19 fund assets must be calculated using the value of the assets at the end of each fiscal
20 year for the five-year period ending with the most recently completed even-numbered
21 fiscal year.
- 22 4. On July first of each odd-numbered year, from the amount available for appropriation
23 or transfer from the legacy earnings fund for the biennium, the state treasurer shall
24 transfer funding in the following order:

- 1 a. The first one hundred two million six hundred twenty-four thousand dollars or an
- 2 amount equal to the amount appropriated from the legacy sinking and interest
- 3 fund for debt service payments for a biennium, whichever is less, to the legacy
- 4 sinking and interest fund under section 6-09.4-10.1.
- 5 b. The next two hundred twenty-five million dollars to the general fund to provide
- 6 support for tax relief initiatives approved by the legislative assembly.
- 7 c. The next one hundred million dollars to the legacy earnings highway distribution
- 8 fund for allocations under section 54-27-19.3.
- 9 d. The next twenty-five million dollars to the legacy earnings emergency services
- 10 and public safety fund under section 2 of this Act.
- 11 e. Any remaining amounts under this subsection as follows:
- 12 (1) Fifty percent to the general fund.
- 13 (2) The remaining fifty percent to the strategic investment and improvements
- 14 fund to be used in accordance with the provisions of section 15-08.1-08.
- 15 5. If the amounts transferred under subsection 2 exceed the amount available for
- 16 appropriation under subsection 3, the state treasurer shall transfer the excess and any
- 17 remaining amounts after the transfers and appropriations under subsection 4, as
- 18 follows:
- 19 a. Fifty percent to the general fund.
- 20 b. The remaining fifty percent to the strategic investment and improvements fund to
- 21 be used in accordance with the provisions of section 15-08.1-08.

22 **SECTION 2.** A new section to chapter 54-27 of the North Dakota Century Code is created
23 and enacted as follows:

24 **Legacy earnings emergency services and public safety fund - Advisory board -**
25 **Continuing appropriation.**

- 26 1. There is created a North Dakota legacy earnings emergency services and public
- 27 safety fund. The fund consists of all moneys deposited in the fund under section 1 of
- 28 this Act and all interest and earnings of the fund. Moneys in the fund are appropriated
- 29 on a continuing basis to the department of emergency services for distributing grants
- 30 awarded by the advisory board and related administrative costs.
- 31 2. The legacy earnings emergency services and public safety advisory board consists of.

1 a. The following members appointed by the governor:

2 (1) A representative of the North Dakota fire chiefs association.

3 (2) A representative of the North Dakota firefighter's association.

4 (3) A representative of the North Dakota emergency medical services
5 association.

6 (4) A representative of the North Dakota emergency management association.

7 (5) A representative of the North Dakota chiefs of police association.

8 (6) A representative of the North Dakota sheriffs association.

9 (7) A representative of the North Dakota peace officers association.

910 (8) A representative of the North Dakota 911 association.

1011 (98) A representative of the North Dakota association of counties.

1112 (109) A representative of the North Dakota league of cities.

1213 (1149) A representative of the North Dakota township officers association.

1314 (1244) A representative of the North Dakota Indian affairs commission.

1415 b. The following members appointed by the chairman of legislative management.

1516 (1) A member of house of representatives representing the party with the
1617 largest number of members in the house and a member of the house of
1718 representatives representing the party with the second largest number of
1819 members in the house.

1920 (2) A member of senate representing the party with the largest number of
2021 members in the senate and a member of the senate representing the party
2122 with the second largest number of members in the senate.

2223 c. The following ex-officio, nonvoting technical members, appointed by the
2324 governor.

2425 (1) A representative of the bureau of criminal investigation as recommended by
2526 the attorney general.

2627 (2) A representative of the department of emergency services.

2728 (3) A representative of the department of transportation.

2829 (4) A representative of the highway patrol.

2930 (5) A representative of the parks and recreation department.

3031 (6) A representative of the game and fish department.

1 (7) A representative of the state fire marshal's office as recommended by the
2 insurance commissioner.

3 (8) A representative of the department of health and human services.

4 3. The advisory board shall receive and review applications to provide grants to political
5 subdivisions and tribal governments, including rural fire districts and emergency
6 medical services providers. In reviewing the applications, the board shall rank and
7 award grant applications that address the following priorities:

8 a. Recruiting and retaining qualified public safety personnel.

9 b. Assisting communities with shared services agreements to ensure public safety
10 coverage.

11 c. Expanding resources to ensure timely emergency response in all areas of the
12 state, including pilot programs for a tiered response framework.

13 d. Providing funding to modernize the delivery of emergency services and public
14 safety through innovations at the community and regional level.

15 e. Establishing response teams to respond to mental health emergencies to reduce
16 reliance on law enforcement resources.

17 f. Ensuring access and implementation of appropriate technology and
18 communications infrastructure.

19 g. Identifying or designating an entity to provide technical assistance to covered
20 entities to aid in securing funding from other sources.

21 4. The department of emergency services shall administer the grant program and provide
22 staff services to the advisory board.



North Dakota Senate

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Senator Josh Boschee

District 44
736 Elm Street North, Apt. 8
Fargo, ND 58102-3859
jboschee@ndlegis.gov

COMMITTEES:

Education
Workforce Development

SB 2332 Testimony Senate State and Local Government Committee February 7, 2025

Chair Roers and Members of the Senate State and Local Government Committee,

It's good to be with you today to talk about this important piece of legislation that will have a lasting impact on North Dakota's emergency services and public safety. Our first responders—firefighters, paramedics, and law enforcement—are the backbone of our communities. They are the ones who answer the call when disaster strikes, yet many of them are facing increasing challenges. Several of you on this committee have been a part of the conversation, but we know that public safety and emergency services across the board are facing staffing issues and outdated equipment.

As legislators, we continue to hear about the challenges volunteer fire departments are facing as their members age, less community members joining the department and, in many cases, due to depopulation, less people to even staff the department. Those who follow me or have provided written testimony are able to provide you with very specific issues facing the various entities they are familiar with.

An average of two ambulance services closing each biennium over the past 10 years¹ and a recent survey completed by ND ambulance services identifying that as many as 30 may close in the next five years².

Last fall the Northwood police department closed³ requiring the city council to explore partnerships with neighboring towns or the county sheriff's office.

That's why this legislation is so critical. It proposes the creation of the Legacy Earnings Emergency Services and Public Safety Fund, a dedicated funding source designed to strengthen our emergency response systems across the state. Modeled after the Outdoor Heritage Fund, this Fund would provide grants vetted by a Board comprised of statewide associations most directly involved with law enforcement, fire safety, emergency medical service and emergency management in North Dakota. I envision that the Fund would not only allocate money to qualified entities, but it would also bring these stakeholders together to develop proactive, innovative approaches to tackle the issues facing their profession and our communities.

¹ [North Dakota Emergency Medical Services System Presentation](https://ndlegis.gov/sites/default/files/committees/68-2023/25.5035.02000_presentation1020.pdf) (slide 19) - https://ndlegis.gov/sites/default/files/committees/68-2023/25.5035.02000_presentation1020.pdf

² [North Dakota Monitor](https://northdakotamonitor.com/2025/01/08/north-dakota-lawmakers-consider-bill-to-prevent-abrupt-ambulance-service-closures/) (1/8/2025), *North Dakota lawmakers consider bill to prevent abrupt ambulance service closures* - <https://northdakotamonitor.com/2025/01/08/north-dakota-lawmakers-consider-bill-to-prevent-abrupt-ambulance-service-closures/>

³ [InForum](https://www.inforum.com/news/north-dakota/northwood-police-department-signs-off-for-final-time) (9/30/2024), *Northwood Police Department signs off for the final time* - <https://www.inforum.com/news/north-dakota/northwood-police-department-signs-off-for-final-time>

The Legacy Fund was created in 2010 by voters to collect tax revenue from our one-time harvest of oil and gas resources. I believe that every one of us that voted to create the Legacy Fund had ideas of how the money could improve the lives of our neighbors across the state. While prior Assembly's have established priorities for the earnings from the Legacy Fund, we have the opportunity to greatly impact the safety of our communities this session as the amount of those earnings continues to grow, allowing for additional priorities.

SB 2332 proposes transferring \$25 million from the Legacy Fund's earnings into this new public safety fund. This funding is proposed to be housed at the Department of Emergency Services, which will help execute the grants to the various entities the Advisory Board determines to meet the following proposed priorities:

- Recruiting and retaining first responders to combat workforce shortages.
- Expanding emergency services in rural areas, to improve coverage and response times.
- Modernizing public safety technology, ensuring our teams have the best tools available.
- Supporting mental health response teams, recognizing that not all emergencies require a traditional law enforcement response.
- Encouraging collaboration between communities, allowing shared services agreements that maximize efficiency, innovation and regionalization to develop tiered approaches to delivering services.

By ensuring that funds are strategically allocated, this legislation creates a long-term, sustainable approach to funding emergency services rather than relying on band aid fixes.

This bill is not just about numbers on a budget—it's about real people and real lives. When a paramedic arrives at a car accident faster because of better funding, when a rural fire department has the staff to handle an emergency, when a mental health crisis is handled with the right support—that's the impact this legislation will have.

We often say that public safety is a priority, but priorities must be backed by action. This bill is our chance to make a meaningful difference, ensuring that our first responders have the support they need to protect us all and the resources to reach those who need them most.

Let's stand together and make this investment in North Dakota's future.

I hope you'll provide SB 2232 your support and before I stand for any questions, I'd like to suggest Madam Chair that the committee consider amending page 2, line 14 to read "An individual involved with a search and rescue organization." Over the past couple of weeks, I've learned of the importance these organizations have in responding to various emergencies and supporting other areas of public safety.

Thank you. I'm happy to stand for any questions or comments you may have.

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

State and Local Government Committee Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2332
2/7/2025

Relating to a legacy earnings emergency services and public safety fund and advisory board; and to the allocation of legacy fund earnings; and to provide a continuing appropriation.

Members Present: Chairman Roers; Vice Chair Castaneda; Senators: Barta, Braunberger, Lee and Walen.

11:05 a.m. Chair Roers called the hearing to order.

Discussion Topics:

- Appropriation recommendation
- Advisory Board

11:05 a.m. Chairman Roers leads discussion on SB 2332.

11:06 a.m. Senator Lee discusses waiting for some clarity.

11:14 a.m. Chair Roers adjourned the meeting.

Susan Helbling, Committee Clerk

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

State and Local Government Committee Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2332
2/13/2025

Relating to a legacy earnings emergency services and public safety fund and advisory board; and to the allocation of legacy fund earnings; and to provide a continuing appropriation.

11:07 a.m. Chair Roers called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Roers; Vice Chair Castaneda; Senators: Barta, Braunberger, Lee and Walen.

Discussion Topics:

- Legislative study

11:07 a.m. Chair Roers explained the legislative study.

11:09 a.m. Senator Lee moved Amendment LC #25.1208.02001, testimony #37697.

11:09 a.m. Senator Walen seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Kristin Roers	Y
Senator Jose L. Castaneda	Y
Senator Jeff Barta	Y
Senator Ryan Braunberger	Y
Senator Judy Lee	Y
Senator Chuck Walen	Y

Motion Passed 6-0-0

11:10 a.m. Senator Lee moved a Do Pass as amended.

11:10 a.m. Senator Walen seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Kristin Roers	Y
Senator Jose L. Castaneda	Y
Senator Jeff Barta	Y
Senator Ryan Braunberger	Y
Senator Judy Lee	Y
Senator Chuck Walen	Y

Motion Passed 6-0-0

Senator Lee will carry the bill.

Senate State and Local Government Committee

SB 2332

2/13/2025

Page 2

11:12 a.m. Chair Roers adjourned the meeting

Susan Helbling, Committee Clerk

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

cc 2/13
1 of 5

SENATE BILL NO. 2332

Introduced by

Senator Boschee

Representatives Brandenburg, Mitskog, Nelson

1 A BILL ~~for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 54-27 of the North Dakota~~
2 ~~Century Code, relating to a legacy earnings emergency services and public safety fund and~~
3 ~~advisory board; to amend and reenact section 21-10-13 of the North Dakota Century Code,~~
4 ~~relating to the allocation of legacy fund earnings; and to provide a continuing appropriation for~~
5 an Act to provide for a legislative management study of grant funding for emergency services
6 and public safety.

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

8 ~~— **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 21-10-13 of the North Dakota Century Code is~~
9 ~~amended and reenacted as follows:~~

10 ~~— **21-10-13. Legacy earnings fund – State treasurer – Transfers.**~~

11 ~~— 1. There is created in the state treasury the legacy earnings fund. The fund consists of all~~
12 ~~moneys transferred to the fund under subsection 2 and all interest and earnings upon~~
13 ~~moneys in the fund.~~

14 ~~— 2. Any legacy fund earnings transferred to the general fund at the end of each biennium~~
15 ~~in accordance with section 26 of article X of the Constitution of North Dakota must be~~
16 ~~immediately transferred by the state treasurer to the legacy earnings fund.~~

17 ~~— 3. For each biennium subsequent to the biennium in which the legacy fund earnings are~~
18 ~~transferred under subsection 2, the amount available for appropriation from the legacy~~
19 ~~earnings fund is seven percent of the five-year average value of the legacy fund~~
20 ~~assets as reported by the state investment board. The average value of the legacy~~

1 ~~fund assets must be calculated using the value of the assets at the end of each fiscal~~
2 ~~year for the five-year period ending with the most recently completed even-numbered~~
3 ~~fiscal year.~~

4 ~~4. On July first of each odd-numbered year, from the amount available for appropriation~~
5 ~~or transfer from the legacy earnings fund for the biennium, the state treasurer shall~~
6 ~~transfer funding in the following order:~~

7 ~~a. The first one hundred two million six hundred twenty four thousand dollars or an~~
8 ~~amount equal to the amount appropriated from the legacy sinking and interest~~
9 ~~fund for debt service payments for a biennium, whichever is less, to the legacy~~
10 ~~sinking and interest fund under section 6-09.4-10.1.~~

11 ~~b. The next two hundred twenty five million dollars to the general fund to provide~~
12 ~~support for tax relief initiatives approved by the legislative assembly.~~

13 ~~c. The next one hundred million dollars to the legacy earnings highway distribution~~
14 ~~fund for allocations under section 54-27-19.3.~~

15 ~~d. The next twenty five million dollars to the legacy earnings emergency services~~
16 ~~and public safety fund under section 2 of this Act.~~

17 ~~e. Any remaining amounts under this subsection as follows:~~

18 ~~(1) Fifty percent to the general fund.~~

19 ~~(2) The remaining fifty percent to the strategic investment and improvements~~
20 ~~fund to be used in accordance with the provisions of section 15-08.1-08.~~

21 ~~5. If the amounts transferred under subsection 2 exceed the amount available for~~
22 ~~appropriation under subsection 3, the state treasurer shall transfer the excess and any~~
23 ~~remaining amounts after the transfers and appropriations under subsection 4, as~~
24 ~~follows:~~

25 ~~a. Fifty percent to the general fund.~~

26 ~~b. The remaining fifty percent to the strategic investment and improvements fund to~~
27 ~~be used in accordance with the provisions of section 15-08.1-08.~~

28 ~~**SECTION 2.** A new section to chapter 54-27 of the North Dakota Century Code is created~~
29 ~~and enacted as follows:~~

~~Legacy earnings emergency services and public safety fund – Advisory board –~~

~~Continuing appropriation:~~

- ~~1. There is created a North Dakota legacy earnings emergency services and public safety fund. The fund consists of all moneys deposited in the fund under section 1 of this Act and all interest and earnings of the fund. Moneys in the fund are appropriated on a continuing basis to the department of emergency services for distributing grants awarded by the advisory board and related administrative costs.~~
- ~~2. The legacy earnings emergency services and public safety advisory board consists of.~~
 - ~~a. The following members appointed by the governor:~~
 - ~~(1) A representative of the North Dakota fire chiefs association.~~
 - ~~(2) A representative of the North Dakota firefighter's association.~~
 - ~~(3) A representative of the North Dakota emergency medical services association.~~
 - ~~(4) A representative of the North Dakota emergency management association.~~
 - ~~(5) A representative of the North Dakota chiefs of police association.~~
 - ~~(6) A representative of the North Dakota sheriffs association.~~
 - ~~(7) A representative of the North Dakota peace officers association.~~
 - ~~(8) A representative of the North Dakota association of counties.~~
 - ~~(9) A representative of the North Dakota league of cities.~~
 - ~~(10) A representative of the North Dakota township officers association.~~
 - ~~(11) A representative of the North Dakota Indian affairs commission.~~
 - ~~b. The following members appointed by the chairman of legislative management:~~
 - ~~(1) A member of house of representatives representing the party with the largest number of members in the house and a member of the house of representatives representing the party with the second largest number of members in the house.~~
 - ~~(2) A member of senate representing the party with the largest number of members in the senate and a member of the senate representing the party with the second largest number of members in the senate.~~
 - ~~c. The following ex-officio, nonvoting technical members, appointed by the governor:~~

- 1 ~~(1) A representative of the bureau of criminal investigation as recommended by~~
- 2 ~~the attorney general.~~
- 3 ~~(2) A representative of the department of emergency services.~~
- 4 ~~(3) A representative of the department of transportation.~~
- 5 ~~(4) A representative of the highway patrol.~~
- 6 ~~(5) A representative of the parks and recreation department.~~
- 7 ~~(6) A representative of the game and fish department.~~
- 8 ~~(7) A representative of the state fire marshal's office as recommended by the~~
- 9 ~~insurance commissioner.~~
- 10 ~~(8) A representative of the department of health and human services.~~
- 11 ~~3. The advisory board shall receive and review applications to provide grants to political~~
- 12 ~~subdivisions and tribal governments, including rural fire districts and emergency~~
- 13 ~~medical services providers. In reviewing the applications, the board shall rank and~~
- 14 ~~award grant applications that address the following priorities:~~
- 15 ~~a. Recruiting and retaining qualified public safety personnel.~~
- 16 ~~b. Assisting communities with shared services agreements to ensure public safety~~
- 17 ~~coverage.~~
- 18 ~~c. Expanding resources to ensure timely emergency response in all areas of the~~
- 19 ~~state, including pilot programs for a tiered response framework.~~
- 20 ~~d. Providing funding to modernize the delivery of emergency services and public~~
- 21 ~~safety through innovations at the community and regional level.~~
- 22 ~~e. Establishing response teams to respond to mental health emergencies to reduce~~
- 23 ~~reliance on law enforcement resources.~~
- 24 ~~f. Ensuring access and implementation of appropriate technology and~~
- 25 ~~communications infrastructure.~~
- 26 ~~g. Identifying or designating an entity to provide technical assistance to covered~~
- 27 ~~entities to aid in securing funding from other sources.~~
- 28 ~~4. The department of emergency services shall administer the grant program and provide~~
- 29 ~~staff services to the advisory board.~~

**SECTION 1. LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT STUDY - GRANT FUNDING FOR
EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY.** During the 2025-26 interim, the legislative

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly

1 management shall consider studying options to provide grant funding for emergency services
2 and public safety. The study must include a review of the amount of grant funding needed,
3 potential funding sources, entities to be eligible to receive a grant, types of expenses to be
4 eligible for reimbursement through a grant program, the appropriate agency to administer a
5 grant program, and options to establish a grant program oversight committee. The legislative
6 management shall report its findings and recommendations, together with any legislation
7 required to implement the recommendations, to the seventieth legislative assembly.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
SB 2332**

State and Local Government Committee (Sen. Roers, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.1208.02001](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). SB 2332 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

25.1208.02001
Title.

Prepared by the Legislative Council
staff for Senator Roers
February 10, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

SENATE BILL NO. 2332

Introduced by

Senator Boschee

Representatives Brandenburg, Mitskog, Nelson

1 A BILL ~~for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 54-27 of the North Dakota~~
2 ~~Century Code, relating to a legacy earnings emergency services and public safety fund and~~
3 ~~advisory board; to amend and reenact section 21-10-13 of the North Dakota Century Code,~~
4 ~~relating to the allocation of legacy fund earnings; and to provide a continuing appropriation~~for an
5 Act to provide for a legislative management study of grant funding for emergency services and
6 public safety.

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

8 ~~— **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 21-10-13 of the North Dakota Century Code is~~
9 ~~amended and reenacted as follows:~~

10 ~~— **21-10-13. Legacy earnings fund -- State treasurer -- Transfers.**~~

11 ~~— 1. — There is created in the state treasury the legacy earnings fund. The fund consists of all~~
12 ~~moneys transferred to the fund under subsection 2 and all interest and earnings upon~~
13 ~~moneys in the fund.~~

14 ~~— 2. — Any legacy fund earnings transferred to the general fund at the end of each biennium~~
15 ~~in accordance with section 26 of article X of the Constitution of North Dakota must be~~
16 ~~immediately transferred by the state treasurer to the legacy earnings fund.~~

17 ~~— 3. — For each biennium subsequent to the biennium in which the legacy fund earnings are~~
18 ~~transferred under subsection 2, the amount available for appropriation from the legacy~~
19 ~~earnings fund is seven percent of the five-year average value of the legacy fund~~
20 ~~assets as reported by the state investment board. The average value of the legacy~~

fund assets must be calculated using the value of the assets at the end of each fiscal year for the five-year period ending with the most recently completed even-numbered fiscal year.

~~4. On July first of each odd-numbered year, from the amount available for appropriation or transfer from the legacy earnings fund for the biennium, the state treasurer shall transfer funding in the following order:~~

~~a. The first one hundred two million six hundred twenty-four thousand dollars or an amount equal to the amount appropriated from the legacy sinking and interest fund for debt service payments for a biennium, whichever is less, to the legacy sinking and interest fund under section 6-09.4-10.1.~~

~~b. The next two hundred twenty-five million dollars to the general fund to provide support for tax relief initiatives approved by the legislative assembly.~~

~~c. The next one hundred million dollars to the legacy earnings highway distribution fund for allocations under section 54-27-19.3.~~

~~d. The next twenty-five million dollars to the legacy earnings emergency services and public safety fund under section 2 of this Act.~~

~~e. Any remaining amounts under this subsection as follows:~~

~~(1) Fifty percent to the general fund.~~

~~(2) The remaining fifty percent to the strategic investment and improvements fund to be used in accordance with the provisions of section 15-08.1-08.~~

~~5. If the amounts transferred under subsection 2 exceed the amount available for appropriation under subsection 3, the state treasurer shall transfer the excess and any remaining amounts after the transfers and appropriations under subsection 4, as follows:~~

~~a. Fifty percent to the general fund.~~

~~b. The remaining fifty percent to the strategic investment and improvements fund to be used in accordance with the provisions of section 15-08.1-08.~~

~~**SECTION 2.** A new section to chapter 54-27 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:~~

~~Legacy earnings emergency services and public safety fund – Advisory board –~~

~~Continuing appropriation.~~

~~1. There is created a North Dakota legacy earnings emergency services and public safety fund. The fund consists of all moneys deposited in the fund under section 1 of this Act and all interest and earnings of the fund. Moneys in the fund are appropriated on a continuing basis to the department of emergency services for distributing grants awarded by the advisory board and related administrative costs.~~

~~2. The legacy earnings emergency services and public safety advisory board consists of:~~

~~a. The following members appointed by the governor:~~

~~(1) A representative of the North Dakota fire chiefs association.~~

~~(2) A representative of the North Dakota firefighter's association.~~

~~(3) A representative of the North Dakota emergency medical services association.~~

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~~(5) A representative of the North Dakota chiefs of police association.~~

~~(6) A representative of the North Dakota sheriffs association.~~

~~(7) A representative of the North Dakota peace officers association.~~

~~(8) A representative of the North Dakota association of counties.~~

~~(9) A representative of the North Dakota league of cities.~~

~~(10) A representative of the North Dakota township officers association.~~

~~(11) A representative of the North Dakota Indian affairs commission.~~

~~b. The following members appointed by the chairman of legislative management:~~

~~(1) A member of house of representatives representing the party with the largest number of members in the house and a member of the house of representatives representing the party with the second largest number of members in the house.~~

~~(2) A member of senate representing the party with the largest number of members in the senate and a member of the senate representing the party with the second largest number of members in the senate.~~

~~c. The following ex-officio, nonvoting technical members, appointed by the governor:~~

- ~~(1) A representative of the bureau of criminal investigation as recommended by the attorney general.~~
 - ~~(2) A representative of the department of emergency services.~~
 - ~~(3) A representative of the department of transportation.~~
 - ~~(4) A representative of the highway patrol.~~
 - ~~(5) A representative of the parks and recreation department.~~
 - ~~(6) A representative of the game and fish department.~~
 - ~~(7) A representative of the state fire marshal's office as recommended by the insurance commissioner.~~
 - ~~(8) A representative of the department of health and human services.~~
- ~~3. The advisory board shall receive and review applications to provide grants to political subdivisions and tribal governments, including rural fire districts and emergency medical services providers. In reviewing the applications, the board shall rank and award grant applications that address the following priorities:~~
- ~~a. Recruiting and retaining qualified public safety personnel.~~
 - ~~b. Assisting communities with shared services agreements to ensure public safety coverage.~~
 - ~~c. Expanding resources to ensure timely emergency response in all areas of the state, including pilot programs for a tiered response framework.~~
 - ~~d. Providing funding to modernize the delivery of emergency services and public safety through innovations at the community and regional level.~~
 - ~~e. Establishing response teams to respond to mental health emergencies to reduce reliance on law enforcement resources.~~
 - ~~f. Ensuring access and implementation of appropriate technology and communications infrastructure.~~
 - ~~g. Identifying or designating an entity to provide technical assistance to covered entities to aid in securing funding from other sources.~~
- ~~4. The department of emergency services shall administer the grant program and provide staff services to the advisory board.~~

**SECTION 1. LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT STUDY - GRANT FUNDING FOR
EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY.** During the 2025-26 interim, the legislative

1 management shall consider studying options to provide grant funding for emergency services
2 and public safety. The study, if conducted, must include a review of the amount of grant funding
3 needed, potential funding sources, entities to be eligible to receive a grant, types of expenses to
4 be eligible for reimbursement through a grant program, the appropriate agency to administer a
5 grant program, and options to establish a grant program oversight committee. The legislative
6 management shall report its findings and recommendations, together with any legislation
7 required to implement the recommendations, to the seventieth legislative assembly.

2025 HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES

SB 2332

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee Pioneer Room, State Capitol

SB 2332
3/10/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide for a legislative management study of grant funding for emergency services and public safety.

3:56 p.m. Chairman M. Ruby opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman M. Ruby, Vice-Chairman Frelich, Representatives K. Anderson, Bolinske, Dobervich, Fegley, Holle, Rios, Rohr

Members Absent: Representatives: Beltz, Davis, Hendrix, Kiefert

Discussion Topics:

- Staffing Retention and Vacancies
- Emergency Management for North Dakota
- Emergency Response System throughout ND

3:56 p.m. Josh Boschee, State Senator, ND Senate, testified in favor and submitted testimony #39872.

4:00 p.m. Bill Kalanek, CEO, APT, testified in favor.

4:01 p.m. Chairman M. Ruby closed the hearing.

Madaline Cooper, Committee Clerk for Jackson Toman, Committee Clerk



North Dakota Senate

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Senator Josh Boschee

District 44
736 Elm Street North, Apt. 8
Fargo, ND 58102-3859
jboschee@ndlegis.gov

COMMITTEES:

Education
Workforce Development

SB 2332 Testimony House Human Services Committee March 9, 2025

Chair Ruby and Members of the House Human Services Committee,

It's good to be with you today to talk about this important piece of legislation that will have a lasting impact on North Dakota's emergency services and public safety. Our first responders—firefighters, paramedics, and law enforcement—are the backbone of our communities. They are the ones who answer the call when disaster strikes, yet many of them are facing increasing challenges. Several of you on this committee have been a part of the conversation, but we know that public safety and emergency services across the board are facing staffing issues and outdated equipment.

As legislators, we continue to hear about the challenges volunteer fire departments are facing as their members age, less community members joining the department and, in many cases, due to depopulation, less people to even staff the department. Those who follow me or have provided written testimony are able to provide you with very specific issues facing the various entities they are familiar with.

An average of two ambulance services closing each biennium over the past 10 years¹ and a recent survey completed by ND ambulance services identifying that as many as 30 may close in the next five years².

Last fall the Northwood police department closed³ requiring the city council to explore partnerships with neighboring towns or the county sheriff's office.

That's why I believe this study is so critical. The original version of 2332 proposed the creation of the Legacy Earnings Emergency Services and Public Safety Fund, a dedicated funding source designed to strengthen our emergency response systems across the state. Modeled after the Outdoor Heritage Fund, this Fund would have provided grants vetted by a Board comprised of statewide associations most directly involved with law enforcement, fire safety, emergency medical service and emergency management in North Dakota. 2332 was amended into a study because the committee felt that it would be a good idea for the legislature to bring stakeholders together and look at the entire

¹ [North Dakota Emergency Medical Services System Presentation](https://ndlegis.gov/sites/default/files/committees/68-2023/25.5035.02000_presentation1020.pdf) (slide 19) - https://ndlegis.gov/sites/default/files/committees/68-2023/25.5035.02000_presentation1020.pdf

² [North Dakota Monitor](https://northdakotamonitor.com/2025/01/08/north-dakota-lawmakers-consider-bill-to-prevent-abrupt-ambulance-service-closures/) (1/8/2025), *North Dakota lawmakers consider bill to prevent abrupt ambulance service closures* - <https://northdakotamonitor.com/2025/01/08/north-dakota-lawmakers-consider-bill-to-prevent-abrupt-ambulance-service-closures/>

³ [InForum](https://www.inforum.com/news/north-dakota/northwood-police-department-signs-off-for-final-time) (9/30/2024), *Northwood Police Department signs off for the final time* - <https://www.inforum.com/news/north-dakota/northwood-police-department-signs-off-for-final-time>

emergency response system throughout the state, rather than address individual aspects of it with individual pieces of legislation as we have the past few sessions as well as the current session.

By ensuring that funds are strategically allocated, this legislation creates a long-term, sustainable approach to funding emergency services rather than relying on band aid fixes.

When a paramedic arrives at a car accident faster because of better funding, when a rural fire department has the staff to handle an emergency, when a mental health crisis is handled with the right support—that's the impact this legislation will have.

We often say that public safety is a priority, but priorities must be backed by action. This study is our chance to take a more proactive, collaborative approach to make a meaningful difference, ensuring that our first responders have the support they need to protect us all and the resources to reach those who need them most.

Thank you. I'm happy to stand for any questions or comments you may have.

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee Pioneer Room, State Capitol

SB 2332
3/10/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide for a legislative management study of grant funding for emergency services and public safety.

4:31 p.m. Chairman M. Ruby opened the meeting.

Members Present: Chairman M. Ruby, Vice-Chairman Frelich, Representatives K. Anderson, Bolinske, Davis, Dobervich, Fegley, Hendrix, Holle, Kiefert, Rios, Rohr

Members Absent: Representative Beltz

Discussion Topics:

- Committee Action

4:31 p.m. Representative Dobervich moved a Do Pass.

4:31 p.m. Representative Frelich seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Matthew Ruby	Y
Representative Kathy Frelich	Y
Representative Karen Anderson	Y
Representative Mike Beltz	AB
Representative Macy Bolinske	Y
Representative Jayme Davis	Y
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	Y
Representative Cleyton Fegley	Y
Representative Jared Hendrix	Y
Representative Dawson Holle	Y
Representative Dwight Kiefert	Y
Representative Nico Rios	Y
Representative Karen Rohr	N

4:32 p.m. Motion carried 11-1-1.

Representative K. Anderson will carry the bill.

4:33 p.m. Chairman M. Ruby closed the meeting.

Madeline Cooper, Committee Clerk, for Jackson Toman, Committee Clerk

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
ENGROSSED SB 2332 ([25.1208.03000](#))**

Human Services Committee (Rep. M. Ruby, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (11 YEAS, 1 NAY, 1 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). SB 2332 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.