

MINUTES

MONTANA SENATE  
51st LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Call to Order: By CHAIRMAN TVEIT, on APRIL 11, 1989, at  
12:30 p.m. in Room 410 of the State Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: SENATORS: Larry Tveit, Hubert Abrams,  
Jerry Noble, Cecil Weeding, Bob Williams

Members Excused: SENATORS: Darryl Meyer, Bill Farrell,  
John Harp, Larry Stimatz

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Lee Heiman, Legislative Council

Announcements/Discussion: CHAIRMAN TVEIT announced the  
hearing on House Bill 792.

HEARING ON HOUSE BILL 792

Presentation and Opening Statement by Sponsor:

REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS, District 53 stated that House  
Bill 792 is an act to bring the amateur radio statutes  
in line with all the other current special license  
plates issuance. This bill will correct an oversight  
that changes only the provision which currently  
requires the amateur radio license plates to be  
purchased in addition to the regular issued plates.  
The only change in the bill is "in lieu of the numbered  
license plates".

List of Testifying Proponents and What Group they Represent:

John Geach, License Ham Radio Operator

List of Testifying Opponents and What Group They Represent:

None

Testimony:

JOHN GEACH, a licensed ham radio operator, also representing approximately 15 members of the capitol city amateur radio club of Helena testified in support of House Bill 792. He gave a brief history of the law and stated that the statute Representative Davis is dealing with dates back to 1957. At that time the legislature passed a law allowing amateur radio operators to have a special plate put on their vehicles so they can be identified during a time of an emergency. The plates have 1 number and 3 to 5 letters. There are 2 plates issued, the regular plates and the amateur radio plates. There is confusion in the law regarding what to do with the second set of plates. Some put the regular plates behind the amateur radio plates. This bill will help to eliminate that confusion. The amateurs have a unique ability to provide radio communications during emergencies. Mr. Geach cited situations where it was a ham radio operator who got the information out first, i.e. Grenada, Mexican earthquake, Dillon plane crash, Mount St. Helena, train derailment in Helena, etc. There have also been times when the police or sheriff could not get through on telephone lines, and the ham radio operators did the communicating for them.

JOHN GEACH concluded that this bill would make it easier for amateurs to get a plate, help law enforcement personnel to interpret this law, and will reduce administrative cost to the State and the County.

Questions From Committee Members: SENATOR NOBLE asked if they pay for the two plates.

REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS said that is correct. First they buy the number plate, then they pay a small fee for the amateur plate.

SENATOR WEEDING asked how often they have to renew their operator's license.

REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS answered every ten years. He also added that Bud Shane in Deer Lodge would love to see this bill pass.

Closing by Sponsor: REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS closed the hearing on House Bill 792.

DISPOSITION OF HOUSE BILL 792

Discussion: Senator Weeding will carry House Bill 792.

Amendments and Votes: None

Recommendation and Vote: SENATOR NOBLE MOVED that HOUSE  
BILL 792 BE CONCURRED IN.

MOTION PASSED with SENATOR WILLIAMS VOTING BY PROXY.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment At: 1:00 p.m.



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SENATOR LARRY TVEIT, Chairman

LT/pb

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ROLL CALL

HIGHWAY

COMMITTEE

DATE 4-11

1989

51st  
LEGISLATIVE SESSION

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
CHAIRMAN TVEIT	✓		
VICE CHAIRMAN MEYER			✓
SENATOR ABRAMS	✓		
SENATOR FARRELL			✓
SENATOR WEEDING	✓		
SENATOR NOBLE	✓		
SENATOR STIMATZ			✓
SENATOR HARP			✓
SENATOR WILLIAMS	✓		

Each day attach to minutes.

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

April 11, 1989

MR. PRESIDENT:

We, your committee on Highways and Transportation, having had under consideration HB 792 (third reading copy -- blue), respectfully report that HB 792 be concurred in.

Sponsor: Davis (Weeding)

BE CONCURRED IN

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Larry J. Tveit, Chairman