

From: Herb Fiddick
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To: House Transportation Committee

Re: SB 144 - Prohibiting the use of a wireless communication device in a school zone or a road construction zone.

Date: March 16, 2017

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of amateur radio operators living and serving in the State of Kansas. I am here to urge your support for the addition of an exemption for amateur radio operators from the requirements of SB 144.

I come to you today representing amateur radio operators in general, but more specifically the members of Johnson County Emergency Communications Services or "ECS". ECS is the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (or RACES) organization appointed by the Johnson County Emergency Management Division. ECS is one of several RACES organizations serving county emergency management organizations throughout the state. RACES is a federally defined amateur radio service authorized under Part 97.407 of the Federal Communications Commission Rules and Regulations and recognized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as a critical piece of the nation's emergency communications infrastructure. RACES organizations in Kansas are coordinated by the Kansas Division of Emergency Management and are included as an essential component of the State emergency communications infrastructure in the Kansas Response Plan.

In Johnson County, approximately 75 amateur radio operators volunteer their time, equipment and skills as weather spotters under the direction of the County Emergency Management Division. These members 100s of hours each year in service to the County and are required to have a permanently installed mobile radio and antenna in their vehicle to ensure effective communications. These volunteers are dispatched to fixed locations by the Emergency Management Duty officer during severe weather events and may pass through multiple school and/or construction zones in route to their assigned location.

SB 144, as currently written would create an unnecessary restriction on the use of amateur radio by these volunteers while in the act of fulfilling their mission to the Emergency Management Division of Johnson County. While this scenario may be a very specific example, I would further point out that there are numerous other amateur radio groups and activities where operators volunteer their time in service to their community and the public every week.

Therefore, I urge the Committee to consider an exemption for amateur radio operators in general based on the information I have provided.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee today. I would be happy to stand for any questions at the pleasure of the Committee.