



## Department of the Secretary of State Bureau of Motor Vehicles

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### JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

#### **L.D. 989 “An Act to Recognize Amateur Radio License Holders by Waiving Fees for License Plates Displaying Call Signs.”**

Testimony of Shenna Bellows, Secretary of State and  
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Department of the Secretary of State

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Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, I am providing testimony in opposition of L.D. 989 “An Act to Recognize Amateur Radio License Holders by Waiving Fees for License Plates Displaying Call Signs.”

This bill exempts amateur radio license holders from the annual fee for a vanity registration plate if the vanity registration plate displays the call sign of the amateur radio station and the registrant complies with other motor vehicle registration laws. The registrant may be required to provide proof of a valid amateur radio license issued by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). This bill specifies that the exemption will not be in effect until the Secretary of State does its regular update of the software used by the Department of the Secretary of State, Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

According to the amateur radio data available online, in 2024, 4,496 Mainers had a valid amateur radio license. An amateur radio license is valid for 10 years.

Currently, vanity (or personalized) plates cost \$25 per year and that money is allocated to the Highway Fund, except for \$10 of the administrative fee must be transferred on a quarterly basis to the TransCap Trust Fund. If all Mainers with a valid Amateur Radio license applied for a vanity plate, the State would lose \$112,400 each year. Even if half of those with a valid license obtained a vanity plate, the revenue lost would be \$56,200 annually. This would pose a fiscal problem for the state particularly now, as the costs of producing plates are increasing due to the rising cost of aluminum and plate sheeting.

Even though this bill specifies the fee exemption wouldn't go into effect until the Secretary of State does its regular update to the software used by the BMV, it would require us to build new functionality into our modernized software. We are currently working on modernizing our computer systems and adding any new functionality will increase the time needed to complete the project. The municipal vendor systems would also have to be updated. Every time updates are required to the software the municipalities use the vendors pass those fees along to the municipalities.

For these reasons we oppose L.D. 989. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions.