



Mike Tipping  
Senator, District 8

**THE MAINE SENATE**  
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Augusta, Maine 04333

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts and honorable members of the Transportation Committee, my name is Mike Tipping, I represent Senate District 8 in Penobscot County and it's my honor to present LD 989 for your consideration.

One of my core memories as a child is riding across the wide-open landscape of central Illinois in my dad's black and white Toyota pickup truck, watching for the formation of tornadoes from a supercell and tracking their path across the fields of corn and soybeans. We would report funnel locations to the local civil defense headquarters using amateur radio. The license plate of that truck was my dad's callsign, WB9RWQ.

I also remember when I got my own amateur radio license in middle school how excited I was to help coordinate rescue services at the Kenduskeag Stream canoe race.

Amateur or ham radio isn't just a hobby. A core part of the licensing process is learning about the importance of public service. Everyone who holds a license understands that they could be called on to help provide communications services in times of emergency.

That's why most states have taken some action to recognize amateur radio license holders through their license plates, in a number of different ways.

This bill would not create a new plate type. It would only waive the \$25 vanity license plate fee for amateur radio license holders who want to put their call sign on their license plate.

It would be a visible reminder, recognizing the public service of those who hold licenses and hopefully sparking some additional interest in ham radio.

The change in fee structure would not go into effect until the next planned update of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles computer system, so as not to incur additional new computer programming costs outside of the procurement cycle.

Damon Liebert, an officer with an Amateur Radio Emergency Service team in Lincoln County, was instrumental in bringing this bill forward and will be available to testify and answer questions.

I'd also note that we have a very strange fiscal note on this bill - one of the weirdest I've seen. Not only were we assured when meeting with the Secretary of State's office that aligning any change with a regular systems update would minimize programming costs, but this note seems to assume that every single licensed ham in the state, about 4,400 people, would immediately ditch

their current plates and get new vanity plates with their callsign. As much as I appreciate their faith in the impact of this bill, I find that outcome to be highly unlikely.

I appreciate your consideration of this bill and I'm happy to answer any questions.