

Submitted to the State of Maine Transportation Committee's March 27th hearing on LD 989 - An Act to Recognize Amateur Radio License Holders by Waiving Fees for License Plates Displaying Call Signs

Dear Committee Members,

Several years ago when applying for my FCC call sign on my license plate I was surprised that Maine didn't have this ability, that in fact it used to, and to top it off that Maine is the only state without a program for amateur radio recognition on motor vehicle plates.

I have been collaborating with Sen. Tipping on this effort for over two years and have met with the Secretary of State, leadership staff at the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and have discussed this initiative with hundreds of amateur radio operators - of which there are 4,382 licensed in the state of Maine. Amateur radio is often given the tag line "When All Else Fails" and many of these operators directly support their community in a wide array of service.

I am submitting testimony of data collected from submissions to an online form for Maine amateur radio operators who support this initiative, that includes how they support their community as well as their specific comments.

LD989 is designed to minimize fiscal costs but I would hope that in the future the committee would support taking it a step further while still minimizing costs. I would propose a plate to make the general public aware that what may otherwise look like random characters, is actually an amateur radio operator. This would raise awareness similarly to how we highlight our first responders, noting that they are not charged annually for a vanity or specialty plate. I am not suggesting a custom specialty plate but rather a die to stamp/emboss the bottom of the plate used by several services such as for coach vehicles. Instead of imprinting "COACH" on the Coach plate, "Amateur Radio" could be stamped at the same time as the call sign. This would not require printing additional specialty plates and minimize cost while demonstrating that the operator could assist when there are no other communications. Many other states recognize this value and either include an embossed lightning bolt, "Amateur Radio," or a specialty plate.

The Maine House and Senate has repeatedly issued joint resolutions "on behalf of the people [they] represent, [for the] opportunity to recognize and acknowledge the accomplishments and public service provided by amateur radio operators." I do hope the Transportation Committee will also recognize amateur radio's public service and will support LD 989 as introduced.

Thank you for your attention, time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Damon Leibert, *N1LJK*

Lincoln County EMA CERT/RACES, *Officer*

(volunteering to provide Auxillary Communications, we are Maine's only FEMA-certified communications team)

<https://www.boothbayregister.com/article/county-amateur-radio-now-fema-certified-communications-team/179587>

How the constituent supports the community with Amateur Radio and for how long have the provided this service:	Comments:
RACES, supporting the county EMA and other community events.	
ARES/RACES, County and Town EMA support, operate 6 VHF/UHF packet stations around the midcoast and 1 HF/VHF/UHF packet station, all with Winlink access. I have provided these services for over 5 years.	
ARES-RACES-CERT, local Special Events	Let's make this happen and not be the only state not supporting Amateur Radio on a MV license plate.
A new ham, with hopes of contributing as I learn	I fully support this effort
ARES/RACES, education, club board member (PBARC), any and all community support I can give	Thank you
20 years	Please keep me up to date of the effort.
Volunteer Examiner, public service events, enjoy being an operator for special on-air events, active in three clubs	This is worth another try, absolutely. I do have a call sign vanity plate at this time.
RACES, Fire Department communications	
ARES/CERT, public service events, emergency communications	
Provide communications and coordination support for parades (example: Bangor 4th of Joly parade), emergency communications with ARES (amateur radio Emergency Service).	
Public service and Emergency Management Agency	I fully support the amateur radio license plate
Oxford County ARES/CERT, 2 years	I currently have a callsign vanity plate, if this passes, will I receive the reduced fees on my existing plate?
Public service volunteer (Pedal the Penobscot, Kenduskeag Stream Canoe Race, Bangor-Brewer Parades)	
I am the Maine State ARES Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC) and the Androscoggin County ARES/RACES Emergency Coordinator (EC). I'm also the Androscoggin Amateur Radio Club President. I have work in a HAM volunteer for well over 20 years supporting emergency communications and running events like Dempsey Challenge and the MS Walks.	I would get a plate

I am available for any emergency communications, and have done so for over 60 years.

I have had amateur radio license plates in 8 states. but in the 9th, I am told - and charged for - vanity plates. We provide services to the people of Maine and should not be taxed or otherwise financially penalized for doing so.

ARES, Public Services, Knox EMA 20 years

I've been active in public service and emcomm for 60 years. I've been paying to have my call plate for 20 years since moving to Maine.

ARRL MAine Section Manager, Washington County
ARES EC, MAine Ham Radio Society President, etc etc

15 years Navy Mars always ready for emergency communications Life Member ARRL

I think that having an amateur call sign plate is to communicate to all authorities that you are equipped for emergency communication.

Traffic Handling, Skywarn

Awesome Endeavor

ARES

10 years

10+ years

ARES/CERT, LL Bean Race, Net Control

Ares and 146.520

Public services (Beach to Beacon)

Member of Lincoln County RACES; support for Skywarn and public service such as Pemaquid Triathlon.

Call sign license plates are important to help identify responding volunteers in times of emergency. In NJ where I live when I'm not in ME call sign plates are in the same category as volunteer firefighters and EMT's.

Emergency Management/ EMCOMM/ RACES/ MARF
Maine Amateure Radio Foundation Board member/
Trek Across Maine/ Repeater owner, ect.

Pemaquid Triathlon 2 years, Wiscaset bike Race 1 year. Florida Hurricane support 1 year

RACES activities, MONDAY EVENING 2M NET CHECKIN, Provided our mobile station to support Wiscasset bike race and Pemaquid Triathlon for past several years. Participated in the Simulated Emergency Test for last two years.

As the only state in the Union that does not have an official automobile HAM license plate with call sign for the plate number, we need to get this done. Having this available would actually provide a service to the citizens of Maine by identifying to the public any HAMS that could be in the vicinity of someone needing assistance in an area where HAM radio is the only method of communication. This is a large territory in Maine.

Public service	I proudly served in the US Navy and have a Veteran Plate on my vehicle. I will only have an Amateur Radio Callsign Plate if it is a Veteran Plate.
ARES	
only about 90 days	
Traffic Handling (2 years)	
ARES. EMA support	
10 years	
Public Service - ME Emergency Communications Net Manager - Traffic Handling	
Public services	
ARES 35 YEARS	HAMS NEED THIS IN MAINE
ARES Traffic handling, public events assistance	Amateur radio stations and operators provide emergency communications without reliance upon infrastructure and hence are a capable means of providing emergency services communications when other systems fail. Amateur radio operators are typically capable of repairing and maintaining their own equipment, and are often called upon when public service systems are disrupted. Therefore the amateur radio community should be recognized for their inherent value, and not for vanity. An amateur radio call sign should not be rolled into the vanity plate program.
ARES/RACES, Public Service i.e. Dempsey Challenge and Beach to Beacon	Most other states do this, Hams are a valuable resource
40 YRS	
I support the York County Emergency Management Agency as a HAM radio operator.	Rather than "Vacationland" on the bottom of the plate I think it should read "Amateur Radio"
40 years	
Currently none of these but looking into getting into ARES	I recently moved to Maine and I was disappointed to see Maine does not offer Ham plates, so I am very interested in this effort. I would be happy to help with anything in this process.
ARES/RACES, Public service at canoe races, marathons, Support Penobscot County Emergency Management Agency. Services provided since 4/2021	One time fee for Stamping the plate. Remove any annual vanity plate fees from any other plates that have call sign (i.e. veteran plates)
I am newer to radio but looking to work with local emergency communications services in my area	This is very important to me because I would love to have my callsign on my plates
Races; Public support Wiscasset Triathlon, penmaquid Triathlon. All over 3 years.	
10 years plus	
10 years	

ARES, EMA technical support volunteer	
ARES	
2 years across multiple events	
ARES, Can Am sled dog races, SKYWARN, work with County EMA office	
Received license this month just started putting together station	
ARES - Since 2007	I really hope this happens.. I now have a vanity plate with my call sign.. Its been a long time coming!
20 public service	
County EMA and ARES 10 years +	
Support Aroostook EMA as a ARES/RACES member	
No service to date. In the future would like to help support an Emergency Management Agency. Currently setting up a station in my home.	Would buy Ham plate if it became available.
ARES/RACES	I presently have a ham radio license I procured back in 1998. I love being able talk to other ham radio operators while traveling and seeing their license plates.
Started in Amateur Radio in 1978 working under the Civil Defense in Massachusetts. I now live in Aroostook County.	Please make this happen, it is a great way to add visibility to an essential emergency contingency, especially in a state where weather and remote living condition can be life threatening.
Local nets, VE exams	
Two months	
5 years	
I currently do not provide these services	
I have provided radio support for the Piscataquis River Race, the Kenduskeag Stream Canoe Race, and the Three Rivers Sled Dog Race over the 15 years I've been licensed.	
SKYWARN reporting since I got my license in 2024.	
Board of directors of local club, ARES, with Knox EMA, AREDN, etc	
All of the above	

5 YEARS

When normal commercial communication such as cell phones and land based lines fail. The Amateur Radio community responds by providing, free of charge, world wide emergency communications in the event of disasters. This is usually the only means of communication for the areas effected by disasters such as tsunamis, earthquakes, severe hurricane force storms, fires and cyclones. Amateur radio gives the affected areas a means to ask for aid and assistance from areas that are unaffected by the disaster. This is why most of the world's countries allow Amateur Radio to exist and protect the part of the radio spectrum that amateurs need to provide this service. Amateurs enjoy the privilege of being able to talk to friends around the world; I guess that is why they are also known as Hams.

But at the same time, they are learning how to communicate. The Amateur Radio Frequency bands may not be used for broadcasting or any other commercial uses. Amateur radio encourages the licensed Hams to excel and improve their skills by holding contests and awards certificates to hams that, during the few days of a contest, can contact the most other hams or the most other countries as well as other categories. Amateur radio operators do all this at their own expense. You can see some documentation of Amateur Radios emergency comm work by clicking on this link to the Amateur Radio Relay League (ARRL) website:
<https://www.arrl.org/public-service>

I AM A MEMBER OF THE LOCAL RADIO AMATEUR COMMUNICATION EMERGENCY SERVICE (RACES). OUR LOCAL GROUP ALSO PROVIDES COMMUNICATION SERVICES FOR PEMAQUID TRIATHLON IN LINCOLN COUNTY MAINE ALONG SEVERAL MILES WHERE THERE IS NO CELL PHONE COVERAGE. I HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH THESE ACTIVITIES FOR ABOUT 3 or 4 YEARS.

To actually promote Amateur Radio, the sample plate above should be modified to include the words "Amateur Radio" because when non hams are viewing a ham plate with just a call sign, they may have no idea what they are looking at. The sample plate above should be modified to include the words "Amateur Radio" in small cursive scroll. if the call sign letters were just a tad smaller "Amateur Radio" would fit between the call sign and the word "MAINE".

Skywarn, Ares, Races, CanAm, PSARC, retired Public Safety Disparcher

From VEAZIE ... Mike Tipping is my Rep...

SGN Net Control

Getting HAM license soon

ARES/RACES volunteer since 1963

I would use this service for myself and my son, KB1PQ. we have two cars and would plate both of them.

Just became a ham.

Hams can be a source of help during difficult times.

EMA for 20 years

Member Of Penn Bay Amateur Radio, Previous member of Algonquin Amateur Radio club Marlboro Mass
