

Arizona Hams Take Legislative Action



On Tuesday, March 28, 2017, Arizona Governor Doug Ducey signed SB1132. It becomes law 90 days after the Arizona Legislature adjourns in mid to late April. This concludes many years of hard work by Arizona hams and begins a new chapter for the future of Amateur Radio in Arizona.

FCC Licensed Amateur Radio operators have been able to get their call sign personalized on Arizona license plates long before the state regularly allowed it. In 1995, Arizona created the specialty plate program where non-profit 501c3 organizations can request a special plate and benefit from a portion of the \$25 annual fee. The Amateur Radio plate was created in 2004, but initially set up to return all monies to Arizona general funds. For several years, prior Section Manager Tom Fagan K7DF, Section Manager Robert Spencer KE8DM, and State Government Liaison Tom Boza NE7X have been trying to get that changed. This bill amends Section 28-2407 of the Arizona Revised Statutes to create a fund that contributes \$17 of each plate fee to an organization benefiting Amateur Radio.

The bill, *SB1132 Amateur Radio Operator Special Plates*, was introduced to the Arizona Senate on January 18th at the beginning of the 53rd Legislature Regular Session by Senator Nancy Barto. As is normal procedure, it was assigned to the Senate Transportation and Technology committee. On January 24th a group of 32 amateur radio operators joined Senator Barto with Virgil Silhanek K7VZ, Tom Boza NE7X, Dennis Bietry KE7EJF, Steve Miller W6SDM, and Robert Spencer KE8DM testifying in favor of the bill. The Transportation and Technology committee then voted 7-0 with a Do Pass recommendation. On January 30th the Rules committee passed the bill as Proper for Consideration (PFC) and with no amendments, it was added to the Consent calendar. On January 31st it was discussed in the Senate Republican and Democrat Caucuses. SB1132's journey through the Senate concluded on February 2nd when the floor voted 29-1 and passed it to the Arizona House.

On February 20th, SB1132 was introduced in the Arizona House with co-sponsor Representative John Allen. Like the Senate, it was assigned to the Transportation and Infrastructure committee. On March 8th, hams once again assembled in the audience as Senator Barto, Tom Boza NE7X, Virgil Silhanek K7VZ, and Steve Miller W6SDM testified before the committee. The motion of Do Pass was confirmed with a vote of 8-0. The House Rules committee approved the bill as Constitutional and in Proper Form (C&P) on March 13th and it was added to the Consent calendar. SB1132 passed the House Caucuses on March 14th and was scheduled for a Third Read and vote on March 16th. Due to lengthy discussion of other bills, the House Floor

adjourned, postponing the vote on SB1132. Finally, it was rescheduled for March 21st where the Arizona House voted, passing SB1132 with 37 yes, 19 no, 4 not voting.

The funds will be directed to the Amateur Radio Council of Arizona (ARCA), a statewide organization comprised of Amateur Radio clubs, working for the betterment of Amateur Radio. ARCA will be able to improve existing scholarship programs, provide better support of club activities and hamfests, and support Amateur Radio education and training in Arizona. The 2016 Arizona Department of Transportation report showed 1078 Amateur Radio Operator plates issued, which would contribute approximately \$18,000 annually to ARCA. At present, ARCA has 26 member clubs that funds will support.

Thank you to everyone who was involved with pushing this legislation forward. Your tireless efforts will benefit Amateur Radio in Arizona for generations to come. Thank you to Senator Barto and Representative Allen who sponsored this bill. They have proven to be great allies to the Amateur Radio community. As well, thank you to all of the Senators and Representatives in the legislature who voted in favor of SB1132's passage.

References / Web Sites:

Arizona Legislature, SB1132 - <http://www.azleg.gov/legtext/53leg/1R/bills/SB1132P.htm>

ARRL Arizona Section - <http://www.az-arrl.org>

Amateur Radio Council of Arizona (ARCA) - <http://www.arca-az.org/>

SB1132 Videos -

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUM5eKr21FLrGSEO00ggfMAT_ynSjt1c8

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