

Minnesota Association of Townships



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Representative Zach Stephenson, Chair
Commerce Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
509 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: House File 586 – Volunteer Driver Definition

Dear Chair Stephenson and Members of the Committee:

As the President of the Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT), I urge you to approve House File 586 (Murphy) as amended by the chief author.

More than 1,781 townships exist in every area of the state. Some are in metropolitan areas while many remain rural agricultural centers. As our population continues to age in place at their rural homes, volunteer drivers are greatly needed as we strive to ensure equal access to healthcare and to the broader community. In some communities of rural Minnesota, volunteer drivers are the only option for transportation services. That is why MAT strongly supports HF586.

This necessary legislation defines a volunteer driver in law as not “for-hire.” It protects volunteer drivers from increased insurance rates and helps to continue the need for volunteerism in townships. Otherwise, some insurance companies will continue to treat volunteer drivers as commercial drivers-for-hire.

When this happens, volunteers are charged higher vehicle insurance rates for the sole reason that they are a volunteer driver. As a result, it becomes increasingly difficult for local community agencies to recruit and retain volunteers. It is even tougher to recruit a neighbor to volunteer, knowing that their insurance company may charge them a commercial rate just for being a good Samaritan.

By supporting HF586, you are protecting and strengthening volunteer driver programs but you are also protecting and strengthening the township way of life. Residents want to continue the tradition of volunteerism and help their neighbors. They want to contribute their talents, skills, and ideas to preserve the quality of life and build their communities across Minnesota.

Please support this HF586 as amended.

Sincerely,

Gary Burdorf
MAT Board President