

**2019 HOUSE TRANSPORTATION**

**HB 1543**

# 2019 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Transportation Committee Fort Totten Room, State Capitol

HB 1543  
1/31/2019  
#31913

- ☐ Subcommittee  
☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature Jeanette Cook
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### Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A BILL relating to autonomous vehicles.

### Minutes:

Attachments 1-2
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**Thomas Beadle**, District 27, introduced and is in support of HB 1543. And provided written testimony. See attachments #1 and 2.

This bill was drafted in conjunction with Emerging Prairie and working with them on some of the technology and ecosystem development that they are doing in the Red River Valley area and across the state. Attachment #2 is information about a project in the Red River Valley called the Grand Farm Initiative. It is a piece of land south of Fargo, and they are working at putting together a totally autonomous farm. They want to make North Dakota as a whole a testing ground for autonomous Ag. technology.

One of the things that they recognize as being a problem to get this plan up to operational level is that they need to be able to get their equipment out on to the field. Right now law is silent or doesn't have the permissive language to allow an autonomous vehicle to fully run on North Dakota roadways. One of the things they want to be able to do when the farm is operational is run the autonomous vehicles down the highway or frontage road. Once the crops are taken out of the field, they want the autonomous vehicle to be able to drive to the elevator, so they can fully show the autonomous process of everything. The bill was put together with Council and Emerging Prairie to make sure we have language out there that would allow autonomous vehicles to operate on the roadway.

I recognize the 1418 has had more work done on it as related to autonomous vehicles. We are in support of emerging technology and would like to set ourselves up in a good position. Emerging Prairie supports HB 1418 as well.

**Chairman Ruby:** Have you looked at the other bill to see if it includes everything that you would need? Is there something that you would need that is not covered in 1418?

**Thomas Beadle:** I think that everything we really need is covered. HB 1543 has more specifics in terms of modification of an autonomous vehicle which causes something to go

wrong, so, the manufacturer would not be liable. I don't think there is a specific preference for one bill or the other.

**Representative Weisz:** Part of your rationale for this bill is Grand Farm, but in this bill it would require registration for all autonomous vehicles. We normally don't register tractors and combines. So, are you going to require registration of a tractor?

**Thomas Beadle:** That was not the intention. We would have to clean that up.

**Chairman Ruby:** It is amazing how efficient farms have become. This will make it even better.

**Thomas Beadle:** The people who introduced this bill are looking forward to having us come out and see what they have going on. The state will have to pay attention because as the technology advances fewer and fewer human components will be involved. That will change the whole economic model of everything.

There was no further support for HB 1543.

There was no opposition or neutral testimony for HB 1543.

The hearing on HB 1543 was closed.

**Vice Chairman Rick C. Becker moved a DO NOT PASS on HB 1543.**

**Representative Paur seconded the motion.**

**Representative Hanson:** Are there components in 1543 that we need to incorporate in HB 1418?

**Chairman Ruby:** I think that we can have that discussion when we are on HB 1418.

**Representative Paur:** I don't like the idea at all of having autonomous farm equipment on the highway. I would like to see it transferred to the field by truck.

**A roll call vote was taken on HB 1543. Aye 13 Nay 1 Absent 0**

**The motion carried.**

**Representative Paulson will carry HB 1543.**

Date: 1-31-19  
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2019 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE  
ROLL CALL VOTES  
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. H B 1543

House Transportation Committee

☐ Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation: ☐ Adopt Amendment  
☐ Do Pass ☒ Do Not Pass ☐ Without Committee Recommendation  
☐ As Amended ☐ Rerefer to Appropriations  
☐ Place on Consent Calendar  
Other Actions: ☐ Reconsider ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

Motion Made By Becker Seconded By Paur

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
CHAIRMAN RUBY	X		REP LAURIEBETH HAGER	X	
VICE CHAIR BECKER	X		REP KARLA ROSE HANSON	X	
REP JIM GRUENEICH	X		REP MARVIN NELSON		X
REP TERRY JONES	X				
REP TOM KADING	X				
REP EMILY O'BRIEN	X				
REP MARK OWENS	X				
REP BOB PAULSON	X				
REP GARY PAUR	X				
REP ROBIN WEISZ	X				
REP GREG WESTLIND	X				

Total (Yes) 13 No 1

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Paulson

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**HB 1543: Transportation Committee (Rep. D. Ruby, Chairman)** recommends **DO NOT PASS** (13 YEAS, 1 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1543 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

**2019 TESTIMONY**

**HB 1543**



HB 1543  
1-31-19  
#1  
p.1

**Written Testimony from Malachi Petersen, Government & Community Relations Coordinator for Emerging Prairie, to be delivered to the North Dakota House of Representatives Transportation Committee regarding HB 1543 during public testimony on 1/31/19.**

Hello,

My name is Malachi Petersen and I'm the Government & Community Relations Coordinator for Emerging Prairie, a nonprofit located in Fargo that focuses on connecting and celebrating entrepreneurs in North Dakota. As a registered lobbyist for Emerging Prairie, I would like to comment on the importance and need for HB 1543 — A BILL for an Act to create and enact chapter 39-10.4 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to autonomous vehicles.

For the past several months, Emerging Prairie has been working with a diverse group of individuals from the private and public sector on an innovative new idea that could change agriculture in the United States forever. The project is called Grand Farm and is an initiative to create the world's first fully autonomous farm by 2025 in North Dakota. This farm, located in the southeastern part of the state on land already obtained by Emerging Prairie, will feature not just an autonomous farm, but also a rapid prototyping center and business accelerator where entrepreneurs can quickly test their products and learn how to grow their businesses.

At Emerging Prairie, we believe that our region has all the necessary parts to create an autonomous farm that will help feed the growing world while developing new opportunities for both private and public sector organizations / companies in communities across the state. Our plan for Grand Farm is to work with both private and public sector partners to build an ecosystem focused on precision agriculture and advanced farming technologies through the hosting of various agriculture-centric events to connect experts in the field of farming automation. In addition to these networking events, Emerging Prairie has begun laying the building blocks for an agriculture-focused business accelerator in the state by leading a trip to California with stakeholders to view the operations of Plug and Play Tech Center — a network startup accelerator and corporate innovation platform. Finally, Emerging Prairie and Grand Farm partners have started connecting with high schools, tech schools, and universities in the state to begin the discussion of how to train a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce with the skills necessary to program and maintain not just the autonomous farm, but other autonomous systems that will begin to become more prevalent over the next few decades.

In order to make Grand Farm a reality, entrepreneurs and private industry partners will need to be able to get autonomous vehicles, including autonomous tractors and autonomous trucks, on and off the farm. These vehicles will be able to do everything from harvesting the fields around the rapid prototyping center on the farm to carrying the harvested product from the farm to local elevators to be sold. Before this can happen though, state highways and other roadways will



need to be available for autonomous testing and operation, with an appropriate regulatory framework in place for the safe operation of such vehicles. HB 1543 appears to do all of this in an appropriate way that will allow the autonomous industry in the state to flourish while also keeping North Dakotans safe.

HB1543  
1-31-19  
#1  
p.2

In closing, our state is uniquely positioned to lead the nation in the autonomous systems industry, specifically autonomous systems in relation to agriculture. With multiple companies working on autonomous construction and farming vehicles in the state, North Dakota has all the pieces necessary to make not only Grand Farm a reality, but other autonomous ventures as well. It may seem like science fiction, but within the next 20 years it would be unsurprising to see a variety of autonomous vehicles operating on roadways across the U.S., including in North Dakota. HB 1543 provides a strong foundation for the state to start developing the regulatory framework to allow for such operations, and I strongly urge this committee to pass this bill with a favorable recommendation.

Thank you for your time,

Malachi Petersen



# GRAND FARM

HB1543  
1-31-19  
#2  
p.1



## 2019 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[www.emergingprairie.com](http://www.emergingprairie.com)



## OUR GOAL



#B1543  
1-31-19  
#2  
P.2

We believe our region has all the necessary parts to create a **fully autonomous farm by 2025** which will help feed the growing world, develop new opportunities for our communities, and to align organizations to evolving themes that will accelerate change in the region.

1. We will map and build the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Red River Valley and North Dakota.

2. We will accelerate the success of entrepreneurs and founders in the agriculture technology space.

3. We will educate a diverse cohort of individuals to fulfill the needs of new and emerging technologies.

## We're placing the building blocks for the Grand Farm Initiative.



Emerging Prairie is building an ecosystem by **hosting agriculture technology conferences to connect people.**



Emerging Prairie is beginning to build a business accelerator by **leading a stakeholder trip to visit a California accelerator.**



Emerging Prairie is exploring partnerships with educators to **develop the state's first computer coding school.**

## OUR WORK



In addition to these steps, Emerging Prairie has also rented land outside of Fargo for the Grand Farm rapid prototyping center / maker space, as well as bought the Grand Farm domain name. Emerging Prairie has also applied for funding through the U.S. Small Business Administration and the North Dakota Department of Commerce.

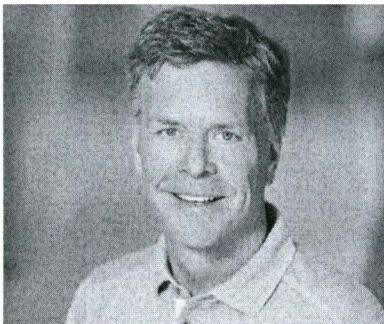


# Advisory Committee

We've started the process of building a Grand Farm Advisory Committee. The mandate of this committee will be to:

HB 1543  
1-31-19  
#2  
p.3

- Consider the best legal structure for Grand Farm.
- Oversee strategic decisions.
- Publicly represent Grand Farm.



Lauris Molbert  
(Co-chair of Advisory Board)  
Arthur Ventures



Christi Offutt  
(Co-chair of Advisory Board)  
R.D. Offutt Company, Inc.



Barry Batcheller  
Appareo Systems



Jake Joraanstad  
Myriad Mobile / Bushel



Kevin Biffert  
Fargo Automation



Greg Tehven  
Emerging Prairie



Jennifer Ford Reedy  
Bush Foundation



Eric Hardmeyer  
Bank of North Dakota



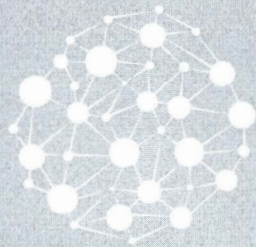
James Leiman  
ND Department of Commerce



## OUR PLANS

HB1543  
1-31-19  
#2  
p.4

Over the next year, we will continue to work to build the foundation for Grand Farm through collaborative efforts with both private businesses and public organizations.



### Widening Our Reach & Impact

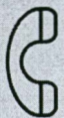
We aim to continue to reach out to interested stakeholders to build a coalition of like-minded individuals and organizations who want to assist in the realization of North Dakota's full potential. By the end of 2019, Emerging Prairie aims to finish building the conceptual model for both the business accelerator and physical farm.



### Fundraising for our future.

Our goal is to build the world's first fully autonomous farm by 2025. In 2019 we will continue to explore options to raise the funds necessary to complete this goal. Whether through public or private financing, Emerging Prairie is confident that the region has the resources to make Grand Farm both viable and sustainable.

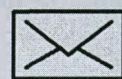
## GET IN TOUCH WITH US



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