



# Legislative Council Staff

## Research Note

Version: Final

Date: 5/18/16

### Bill Number

House Bill 16-1040

### Sponsors

*Representative Singer*

### Short Title

**Auxiliary Emergency Communications**

### Research Analyst

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### Status

This research note reflects the final version of the bill and becomes effective upon the signature of the Governor.

### Summary

This bill, **recommended by the Wildfire Matters Review Committee**, creates the Auxiliary Emergency Communications Unit (unit) in the Office of Emergency Management in the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management in the Colorado Department of Public Safety (DPS). The unit has the power to:

- establish programs for the training and credentialing of auxiliary emergency communicators across the state;
- assume all the duties and responsibilities of the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES); and
- ensure that auxiliary emergency communicators are authorized volunteers entitled to the appropriate protections and benefits of emergency volunteers when assisting local governments with the maintenance or demolition of communication facilities.

In pursuance of this authority, the DPS may develop and issue photo identification cards to auxiliary communicators, conduct criminal background checks, and reimburse emergency communicators for necessary travel and other expenses incurred in performance of their duties.

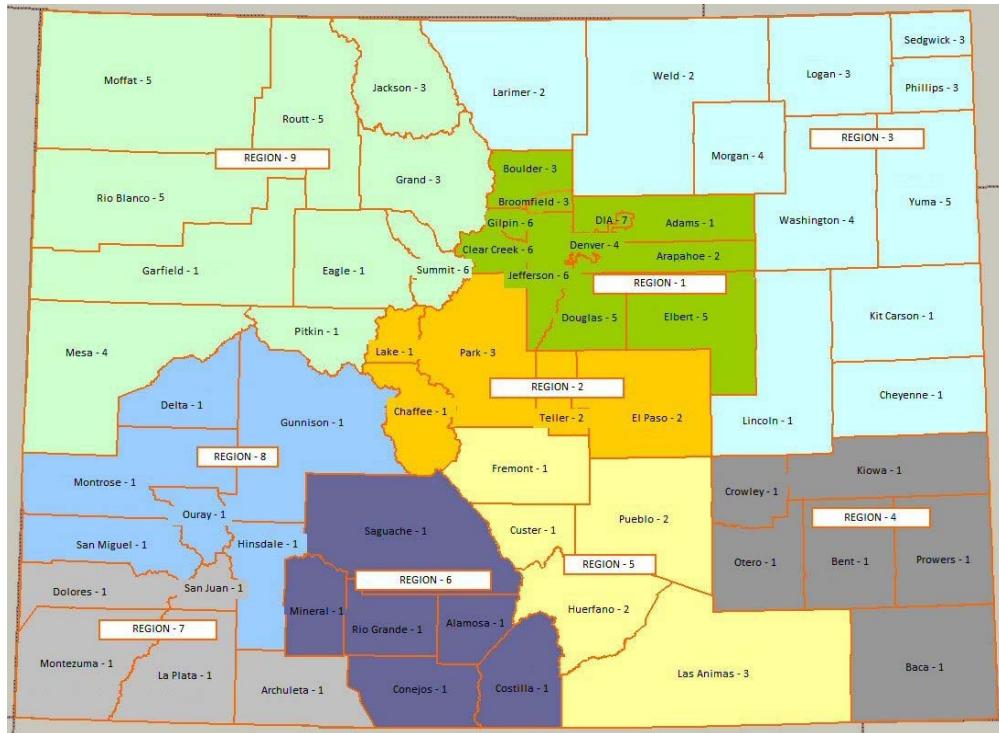
### Background

The Colorado section of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) is a volunteer group of trained amateur radio operators. It works with local government agencies such as police and fire, and with offices of emergency management to assist with emergency communication needs

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in the state. The Colorado section of ARES is comprised of nine regions and 28 districts as shown in Figure 1 on the next page. Each region has a designated emergency coordinator.

**Figure 1. Colorado ARES Regions and Districts**



Source: <http://www.coloradoares.org/wordpress/districts1/>

### House Action

**House Local Government Committee (February 11, 2016).** Several individuals testified in support of the bill, including a representative of the Department of Public Safety and three trained amateur radio operators. The committee adopted amendments L.001 and L.002. The amendments made several technical corrections to the bill and removed a provision of the bill allowing local governments to enter into memorandums of understanding with the amateur radio emergency service.

**House Appropriations Committee (May 3, 2016).** The committee adopted amendment J.001, which added an appropriation clause, and referred the bill to the House Committee of the Whole.

**House Second Reading (May 3, 2016).** The House adopted the House Local Government and House Appropriation Committee reports. The House also adopted an amendment striking the provision of the bill that added the ARES section emergency coordinator for the Colorado section of the Amateur Radio Relay League as a member of the Public Safety Communications Subcommittee of the Homeland Security and All-Hazards Senior Advisory Committee in DPS. The bill passed on second reading.

**House Third Reading (May 4, 2016).** The House passed the bill on third reading with no amendments.

## Senate Action

**Senate Finance Committee (May 5, 2016).** One individual representing the American Amateur Radio League testified in support of the bill. The committee referred the bill to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

**Senate Appropriations Committee (May 5, 2016).** The committee referred the bill to the Senate Committee of the Whole with a recommendation that it be placed on the consent calendar.

**Senate Second Reading (May 5, 2016).** The Senate passed the bill on the second reading consent calendar with no amendments.

**Senate Third Reading (May 6, 2016).** The Senate passed the bill on third reading with no amendments.

## Relevant Research

Department of Public Safety, Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management, Communications Section: <http://tinyurl.com/nlcwdwx>