

Call Plates for Classic Vehicles in Connecticut

At the present time, Connecticut hams can obtain special Amateur radio call plates. These plates include a distinctive lightning bolt. There is no added charge for these plates - just the cost of changing the registration.

Amateur radio call plates, however, are only available as passenger car plates. They are not available for "Classic Vehicle" plates. These are sometimes referred to as "antique plates," and as their name implies, they are only for older and collectable cars. In Connecticut, a car must be twenty or more years old in order to be eligible for such a plate. One advantage of a classic vehicle plate in Connecticut is that the car's maximum assessment for tax purposes is automatically limited to \$500.

While a ham could get his or her call sign on a classic vehicle vanity plate, there are some significant differences. First, there is an added fee vanity plate. It would also not include the distinctive lightning bolt. And finally, the vehicle's assessed value may exceed \$500 without taking some additional steps.

After a 25 year hiatus in his garage, Mike Gruber, W1MG, had his 1952 MG TD restored at a nearby restoration facility. The old-style plates were no longer available and new "Classic Vehicle" plates were issued as replacements. Ultimately, however, Mike wanted Call Plates W1MG for his MG. The Connecticut Motor Vehicle Department, however, indicated that this would not be possible unless he switched to passenger plates. Mike was also surprised to learn that Purple Heart and Greenway plates were also not available as Classic Vehicle plates.

Mike subsequently contacted his State Senator, John Kissel, in hope of changing the situation. An aide at Senator Kissel's office, Kate McAvoy, contacted him a few days later. After some discussion concerning the options, Ms. McAvoy indicated the Senator would try to take it up at the next session of the General Assembly, which meets this month.

To that end, Senator Kissel has new sent a letter to the leadership of the General Assembly's Transportation Committee requesting that they take up such a bill at the next session. A copy of this letter, dated January 18, 2022, is attached. Note: The Transportation Committee is a 36-member joint committee. It consists of legislators from both the Houses and Senate of the General Assembly.

Kate McAvoy is also recommending that interested and concerned persons contact members of the Transportation Committee to voice their support for this bill. She suggests an email telling them why this bill is important and needs to be raised would help encourage them to raise it for public hearing. (Mike also suggests that Purple Heart recipients, along with a brief mention of Amateur radio's history of public service, would also be helpful.)

The Transportation Committee leadership contact info is as follows:

Senator Will Haskell, Will.Haskell@cga.ct.gov

Rep. Roland Lemar: Roland.Lemar@cga.ct.gov

Senator Heather Somers: Heather.Somers@cga.ct.gov

Rep. Devin Carney: Devin.Carney@cga.ct.gov

Contact info for the remaining committee members can be found at: <https://cga.ct.gov/tra/>.

Mike wishes to thank both Senator Kissel and Kate McAvoy for their help with this issue.