

WATER TOPICS OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING

South Convention Center, Minot

April 10, 2014

Comments by Representative Curt Kreun, District 43:

Thank you to my colleagues in the Legislature, State Water Commissioners and Governor's office, and all those who were able to attend the meeting today and speak about project's around the State.

As we wrap up our tour of the State and think on what we have heard from our various constituents I want to discuss how we will take this information and use it for the betterment of our State. H.B. 1206 required our committee to develop water policies for the State as well as prioritize water projects.

To date, the State Water Commission has put considerable effort into defining their view of what our State's water policy should be without input from our committee. After drafting a proposed policy, the State Water Commission held regional meetings to inform people about the draft policy. The State Water Commission received written comments on the policy as proposed. In response to some commenters, the State Water Commission made minor revisions to the proposed policy and has presented their revised draft policy as State policy.

While the State Water Commission was drafting this policy, our Committee has been on a fact finding mission. Our committee has met in Bismarck, Dickinson, Grand Forks, Fargo, and now Minot. We have entertained speakers with stories of the variety of water issues are State is facing. We have heard about the water supply issues in the west, the flood protection issues in the east, the water supply challenges of the northeast, and now the flood struggles of the north central. We have had State officials tell us what they are doing to address these issues. With this information in hand it is time for us to determine our next steps.

While I don't agree with everything the State Water Commission has done, I do not want to discount totally the effort they have put forth either. As we decide how to move forward and fulfill our responsibilities under H.B. 1206, I propose we work with the State Water Commission to refine the policies in light of the real needs that we have heard from around the State. Specifically, I believe we should look at how to incorporate the comments the State Water Commission received and expand the view of what this policy can accomplish.

What I am asking today is that we come together as a committee and decide how we will fulfill our obligation in this process. Whether we will provide comments on the State Water Commission's proposed policies or draft our own policies we need to do something. In order to take advantage of the opportunities in front of us we must move forward.