

2011 HOUSE TRANSPORTATION

HCR 3032

# 2011 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

House Transportation Committee  
Fort Totten Room, State Capitol

HCR 3032  
02/10/2011  
Job # 14337

Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature *Jeanette Cook*

## Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

HCR 3032 is a concurrent resolution directing the Legislative Management to study the needs of, economic values of, and methods to improve access roadways to recreational, tourist, and historical sites in North Dakota.

## Minutes:

Attachments #1-6

**Vice Chairman Weiler, District 30 in Bismarck**, introduced HCR 3032 and spoke in support of the resolution. He feels that is the responsibility of the legislature to support infrastructure in all of North Dakota.

**Representative R. Kelsch**: Could you give us some examples of the roads that you are talking about?

**Vice Chairman Weiler**: One of the areas that comes to mind is the Lake Sakakawea area. It has the potential to be a tremendous source of wealth and revenue from tourism.

**Chairman Ruby**: We do have the Special Road Fund that is in place to improve these roads. Do you want to expand that, or possibly have the study come up with new sources of revenue?

**Vice Chairman Weiler**: I think that the purpose of the study would be to do both.

**Representative Delmore**: A lot of the projects that have been mentioned are in western North Dakota. Are there roads in the eastern areas that are beneficial to tourism as well, such as Devils Lake?

**Vice Chairman Weiler**: I apologize if I just focused on western North Dakota. The Devils Lake area is going to be a major fishing and recreational area. The roads will be a big part of that. There are some historical sites and the Ronald Regan missile site. Probably one of the best areas in North Dakota is Lake Metigoshi. There are many areas that deserve attention.

**Chairman Ruby**: This is written broadly enough to study of all areas of North Dakota.

**Representative Weisz, District 14**, added his support to HCR 3032. He stated that we do have a special road fund that has been ongoing since 1999. It does fund a lot of things across the state. Since we do need to fund it, it will be worthwhile to look at ways to get additional money. He feels that it is important to look at the access to *all types* of recreational areas in North Dakota.

**Michael Gunsch**, a member of the Friends of Lake Sakakawea and a registered professional engineer in North Dakota, spoke in support of HCR and provided written testimony. See attachment #1.

**Representative Delmore**: Do you have any idea where the other requests for funding came from?

**Michael Gunsch**: I will list by county the 2009 applications: Sibly Park in Barnes County, Lake Metigoshi in Bottineau County, Cattail Bay in Emmons County, LaVerge Avenue in Grafton, Lake Isabel in Kidder County, Doyle Memorial State Park in McIntosh County, Brush Lake Pavilion in McLean County, Harmon Lake in Morton County, Parshall Bay Road in Mountrail County, Turtle River State Park, Standing Rock Historic Site, and Fort Buford in Williams County. These projects comprised the \$3.1 million that I noted earlier.

**Representative R. Kelsch**: Can we add signage to this? Harmon Lake in Morton County is a good example of this. The road isn't signed, so people might not know where the lake is.

**Michael Gunsch**: In my opinion signage is always a part of a roadway project. It would be good to have a tabulated list of where all the areas in North Dakota are at.

**Chairman Ruby**: Is there any federal funding available for these areas that have access to water?

**Michael Gunsch**: There was a lot of money put into upgrading the boat ramps as the water was falling away. There are no dedicated funds or allocations at this point in time to improve roadways within the Corps boundaries. They do maintain those if they are Corps roadways. In most cases the Federal Government will step up to fund things if the locals are willing to sponsor and cost share to a certain level. So, in order to acquire the federal funds the state has to be able to fund to a certain point, and then the federal would kick in.

**Chairman Ruby**: For those types of funds would they be willing to do that off of state land areas, such as county or township roads that are accessing the area?

**Michael Gunsch**: I do not believe that they will pay for anything off of their properties.

**Representative Frantsvog**: The primary intent would be to identify which projects should be funded? Is that correct?

**Michael Gunsch**: That is correct. We would first have to identify which projects are out there, and which ones should be funded. There are some that would fall off.

**Representative Frantsvog:** You read a list of projects from 2009. Who did that study and who prioritized it?

**Michael Gunsch:** Those were actual applications to the special roads fund in 2009. The individual sponsors brought those projects forward with the Department of Transportation. Then the Department of Transportation has a special committee that is established by statute. They make the decision on how to prioritize the site and where to expend the funds.

**Representative Frantsvog:** Would the Department of Transportation take part in this prioritization?

**Michael Gunsch:** We are leaving that entirely open to Legislative Management.

**Representative Gruchalla:** The current process is not satisfactory?

**Michael Gunsch:** The current process is satisfactory, but there are not enough funding dollars to complete the projects. The dollars are totally inadequate to address the needs that exist. From that perspective, we would like to find out what the needs are, and then decide to adequately fund it in some way. The individual project sponsors will have to step up and request the dollars. Last session we introduced a bill to try to get dollars to put money into the Special Roads Fund, but it failed.

**Kelly Sorge, a board member of the Friends of Lake Sakakawea and owner of Indian Hills Resort on Lake Sakakawea,** spoke in support of HCR 3032. She asked the committee members to think about the sense of pride that they have in their state. There is a need for continued support and continued development to recreational areas in our state. Modern access should not be questioned, and that is why she asks for a DO PASS on HCR 3032.

**Representative Gruchalla:** Did you make a request of the Special Roads Fund in 2009?

**Kelly Sorge:** Not in 2009.

**Representative Frantsvog:** How many miles of gravel do you have to get to your resort?

**Kelly Sorge:** Approximately two and one half.

**Representative Frantsvog:** Do you own all the property between your resort and the asphalt?

**Kelly Sorge:** No, I do not.

**Representative Frantsvog:** Have you ever looked a special assessment, where everyone would share the cost?

**Kelly Sorge:** No, we haven't. We have a very limited number of people at the end of the road. It is remote and mostly farmland. There would be less than twenty people that would have to share in the project, and it would probably be too costly.

**Representative Delmore:** How many visitors do you get to your area?

**Kelly Sorge:** The Corps of Engineers did a traffic study, and we are somewhere between 25,000 to 30,000 visitors.

**Ron Kraft, a board member for Voices of Lake Oahe,** spoke in support of HCR 3032. He described to the committee a project that he thinks fits this bill perfectly. It is SB 2200, and it provides an appropriation for a grant to the Cattail Bay road improvement project. Cattail Bay is located 75 miles south of Bismarck off of 1804 on Lake Oahe or directly across the lake from Fort Yates. He explained the project, and that they did make previous application to the Special Roads Fund and are making a new application this spring. He believes the HCR 3030 will help to find funding all funding projects all over North Dakota. See attachment # 2.

**Blair Ihmels,** member of Friends of Lake Sakakawea, spoke in favor of HCR 3032 and provided written testimony. See attachment #2.

**There was no further support for HCR 3032.**

**Erik Spencer, North Dakota Parks and Recreation,** spoke in a neutral position on HCR 3032. North Dakota Parks and Recreation administers the North Dakota Scenic Byway Program and provided e-mails from Byway partners that expressed interest in HCR 3032. See attachments # 4-6.

**Representative Weisz** moved a DO PASS on HCR 3032 and to have it placed on the consent calendar.

**Representative Delmore** seconded the motion.

**Representative R. Kelsch:** Is the committee comfortable that signage is a part of roadway access in the study, or do we feel that the word signage should be added to the resolution? I feel signage is a key to upgrading these sites.

**Representative Weisz:** I think it is inherent in the idea that we want people to be able to access these areas in North Dakota.

**Chairman Ruby:** I think that the signage that would be acceptable for each road would be considered.

**Representative R. Kelsch:** We want the record to state that looking at signage should be a part of this resolution.

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

**The motion carried, and the Resolution will be placed on the Consent Calendar.**

**Representative Delmore will carry HCR 3032.**

Date: 2/10/11

Roll Call Vote #: 1

2011 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 3032

House TRANSPORTATION Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken  Do Pass  Do Not Pass  Amended  Adopt Amendment

Rerefer to Appropriations  Reconsider

Motion Made By R Weisz Seconded By L Delmore

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Ruby	✓		Representative Delmore	✓	
Vice Chairman Weiler	✓		Representative Gruchalla	✓	
Representative Frantsvog	✓		Representative Hogan	✓	
Representative Heller			Representative Onstad	✓	
Representative R. Kelsch	✓				
Representative Louser	✓				
Representative Owens	✓				
Representative Sukut	✓				
Representative Vigesaa	✓				
Representative Weisz	✓				

Total (Yes) 13 No 0

Absent 1

Floor Assignment Delmore

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

*Do pass and place on the Consent Calendar.*

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**HCR 3032: Transportation Committee (Rep. Ruby, Chairman) recommends DO PASS and BE PLACED ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR (14 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HCR 3032 was placed on the Tenth order on the calendar.**

2011 SENATE TRANSPORTATION

HCR 3032

# 2011 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Senate Transportation Committee  
Lewis and Clark Room, State Capitol

HCR 3032  
March 11, 2011  
15336

Conference Committee



## Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A concurrent resolution directing the Legislative Management to study the needs of, economic values of, and methods to improve access roadways to recreational, tourist, and historical sites in North Dakota.

## Minutes:

*Written testimony*

**Chairman Senator G. Lee** opened the hearing on HCR 3032.

**Representative Weiler**, District #30, introduced the resolution for the study and explained the need. He said that the roads out west are the most important but we can't forget that there are other issues with roads in the state. This bill is simply here to study some of the other roads and access roadways in the state of North Dakota that will help our tourism industry and recreational aspect.

**Michael Gunsch**, a member of the Friends of Lake Sakakawea and a registered professional engineer in North Dakota testified in support of HCR 3032. He stated that this study is a reasonable and appropriate process whereby the State of North Dakota can review and evaluate the need for improving access roadways into recreational, tourist and historic sites. See written testimony #1.

**Bill Mitzel**, publisher of Dakota Country magazine, testified in support of HCR 3032. He said that our roads are our lifeline to most everything in North Dakota. It's a farm-to-market trail, a route to medical treatment, a link to the business community. Our roads are also our connection to recreation, a pursuit that nearly one of every three people in this state enjoys on a regular basis. See written testimony #2.

**Emanuel Stroh**, Dunn County Director for Friends of Lake Sakakawea and Chairman of McKenzie Bay Marine Club, testified in support of HCR 3032. There are roads that are in dire need of improvement. There are public use areas with nice campgrounds, boat ramps, fish cleaning stations, concessions and full public facilities and the roads are sometimes impassable. See written testimony #3.

**Senator Nodland** asked if they received funding last year from the special road fund for the McKenzie Bay project or did the county do that.

**Mr. Stroh** replied that they got some from the county and the DOT special road fund. The three miles of road that was done turned out very nice. They also received some funding from the Game and Fish.

**Blair Ihmels**, a member of the Friends of Lake Sakakawea, testified in support of HCR 3032. He believes that it is time to start this plan to study and set priorities that not only improve access for our own residents but to also be aware of the images that friends and neighbors from across this great nation should have when they visit North Dakota. See written testimony #4.

**Eric Spencer**, Recreational Division Manager for North Dakota Parks, testified in support of undertaking this study. He brought letters of support from: City of Walhalla, Valley City Visitors Bureau and Sheyenne River Valley National Scenic Byway Association.

**No opposing testimony.**

**Senator Lee** closed the hearing on HCR 3032.

**Senator Mathern** moved a **Do Pass**.

**Senator Nodland** seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: 5-0-1. **Motion passed.**

Carrier is **Senator Sitte**.



Com Standing Committee Report  
March 11, 2011 11:38am

Module ID: s\_stcomrep\_44\_001  
Carrier: Sitte

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**HCR 3032: Transportation Committee (Sen. G. Lee, Chairman) recommends DO PASS**  
(5 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HCR 3032 was placed on the  
Fourteenth order on the calendar.

2011 TESTIMONY

HCR 3032

**House Transportation Committee**

**Thursday, February 8, 2011, 10:30 am**

**Fort Totten Room**

**In support of House Concurrent Resolution #3032  
Michael H. Gunsch, Member - Friends of Lake Sakakawea  
Phone 701-527-2134 (cell)**

Chairman Ruby and members of the committee, I'm Michael Gunsch, a member of the Friends of Lake Sakakawea (FOLS) and a registered professional engineer in North Dakota. Funding to construct and improve roadways to recreational, tourist and historical sites in North Dakota is inadequate to meet current and future needs. During the last legislative session the FOLS worked to increase the contribution percentage from 40% to 80%, which increased the funds allocated to the Special Road Funds (SRF) established under NDCC 24-02-37. The results were woefully inadequate to make any meaningful difference due to continuing low interest rates and the amount of transportation funds on deposit.

There was a notable increase in the number of SRF applications in 2009, as awareness of this program increased through the renewed discussion of such projects. The Cattail Bay project in Emmons County is one example of the funding shortfall, where their \$244,050 request was funded in the amount of \$100,000. The maximum per project under SRF policy is \$250,000. There are many other projects in need of funding, however additional applications are likely not forthcoming as there are no meaningful funds available. The eligible costs requested during 2009 for the SRF program were \$3,105,518, and based on a 60% construction cost share \$1,588,846 would have been necessary to fund all the requests. Since adequate funding is unavailable there are unanswered questions which will be addressed by HCR3032. What are the needs? What is the value of such sites? What is a reasonable level of access and what does that consist of? What level of state and local funding is required to achieve the best results for our state, regional and local areas?

In order to realize the economic benefits associated with the investment access roadways need to first be identified and prioritized to document the greatest need for improvement and their respective values. This can be accomplished using existing information sources including County Engineers, County Park Boards, County Commissioners, local sportsman's groups, state agencies, and others. The study results will provide valuable information for planning and future funding allocations to enhance and develop recreational, tourist and historic sites in North Dakota.

Understand that access roadways improvements are not all destined, nor are they perceived, to be from a dirt trail to pavement. The need might be an upgrade from a dirt trail to gravel road, or from poor gravel to improved gravel, or from gravel to a hardened surface using new gravel stabilization technologies, or from gravel to pavement. All improvements would be based on the existing and projected use and needs of each site. Is this a situation of a “Field of Dreams” – “build it and they will come?” No, in many cases people have already visited and have left unhappy, they may not return. Do we need to construct access beyond what the demand and use requires? No, but it is clear to many of us if access were improved, as it needs to be in many locations, use will significantly increase and justify the investment. It is also understood that there will be sites identified that do not require or warrant improvements.

In summary HCR #3032 is a reasonable and appropriate process whereby the State of North Dakota can review and evaluate the need for improving access roadways into recreational, tourist and historic sites. This process is not unlike the recent Northern Great Plains Transportation Institute study that addressed the need for roadway improvements associated with the oil development impacts. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony and I encourage your support for HCR 3032 and a “DO PASS” recommendation.



# VOICES FOR LAKE OAHÉ

*Established On February 22, 2003 to provide leadership in developing recreational, agricultural, economic and environmental opportunities for Lake Oahe*

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Voices for Lake Oahe (VFLO) and the Emmons County Commissioners are actively focusing on the Cattail Bay Road Improvement Project. This would consist of sub-grade prep. and paving the entire road way from Highway 1804 to the boat ramp approximately 5.25 miles. Total cost \$2,088,762.00.

## **This project is broken down into two phases:**

### **Phase One:**

Widen and prepare sub-grade base for paving from boat ramp (east) out to first intersection, approximately 1.25 miles. Cost estimate \$307,335.00. Completion date fall of 2011.

To date VFLO has secured \$100,000 of SRF funds from DOT and \$9,000 from Handshake Grant from U.S. Army Corp Of Engineers Pierre S.D.

VFLO has raised \$18,750.00 in private monies.  
Total funds secured \$127,750.00

Phase one balance of \$179,595.00.

VFLO has filed two additional grant applications for phase one. \$150,000.00 and \$188,585.00. Will know out come in April/May of 2011.

### **Phase Two:**

Minimal sub-grade prep. of remaining 4 miles and paving of entire project to be completed in conjunction with (either) scheduled resurfacing of Highway 1804 from junction Highway 13 north the Hazelton road in 2012.

or from junction of Highway 13 & 1804 south to the South Dakota line in 2014.

Winona/Cattail  
Beaver Creek Northwest/Main Camping Area

Traffic Counts for April thru October / years 2007 thru 2010

2007 @ Cattail average monthly vehicle count	1113
2007 @ Beaver Creek average monthly vehicle cnt.	1493
2008 @ Cattail average	1413
2008 @ Beaver Crk. average	2027
2009 @ Cattail average	2016
2009 @ Beaver Crk. average	5493
2010 @ Cattail average	2659
2010 @ Beaver Crk. average	6856

Cattail Bay has seen additional 1546 vehicle average count per month.  
58.25% increase in 2010 compared to 2007

Beaver Creek has seen additional 5363 vehicle average count per month.  
78.25% increase in 2010 compared to 2007.

11.0539.01000

Sixty-second  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

SENATE BILL NO. 2200

FS Hearing  
Friday 1-21-11

Introduced by

Senator Erbele

Representatives Brandenburg, Kretschmar

1 A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of transportation for a grant for  
2 the Cattail Bay road improvement project.

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

4 **SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION.** There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general  
5 fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$2,100,000, or so much of the  
6 sum as may be necessary, to the department of transportation for the purpose of providing a  
7 grant to Emmons County for the Cattail Bay road improvement project, for the biennium  
8 beginning July 1, 2011, and ending June 30, 2013.

1999

Delmore, Kelsch, Ruby SRF

Good Morning Mr. Chairman Ruby and House Transportation Committee members

I'm Ron Kraft Bismarck and I sit on the Board of Directors for Voices for Lake Oahe. Here today to testify in support of House Concurrent Resolution # 3032.

Mr. Chairman may I am please bring you and the committee up to date on a current day project that in my opinion is what Resolution 3032 is all about.

Senate Bill 2200 was introduced by Senator Robert Erbele and Representatives Mike Brandenburg, and William Kretschmar. And it reads as such.

We had our first hearing on SB2200 on Friday 1/21/11 three weeks tomorrow. We anticipated no action would be taken and non was, referred to sub-committee

Our project is.....

We have a stakeholder who will donate 1700 ton of class 5 gravel, his gravel pit is approximately right in the middle of project. I ask Emmons County Commission if they would haul the 1700 ton of free gravel as in kind services and their reply was.

I do have a closing statement to make but I will take any questions now.

In closing Voices for Lake Oahe would like to publicly thank Friends of Lake Sakakwae for making Resolution 3032 a state wide issue. This is not all about Sakakwae, I believe the Cattail Project proves this point. We ask this committee For a do pass on studying Resolution 3032.

Thank you.

**House Transportation Committee**

Thursday, February 8, 2011, 10:30 am  
Fort Totten Room

**In support of House Concurrent Resolution #3032**  
**Blair H. Ihmels, Member - Friends of Lake Sakakawea**  
**Phone 701-222-4259**

Good Morning, I'm Blair Ihmels, a member of the Friends of Lake Sakakawea (FOLS) and I live in Bismarck, North Dakota and I own a recreational home in Riverdale, North Dakota. Before owning that home we struck out as a young family in the 80's to explore Lake Sakakawea and we would travel to camping locations like Wolf Creek on the south east shore, Indian Hills, Deep Water Bay and Lund's Landing on the north shore and Beulah bay on the south shore. Most of those destinations were often at the end of a dusty, washboard and bumpy road. My passion for outdoor activities around our state has not been limited to just Lake Sakakawea but has included every corner and a multitude of recreation opportunities.

Through those experiences I now have a mature understanding of our challenges to encourage our future generations to enjoy the passions that I dearly love. Some of those include an investment to improve access to our rich natural resources. Believing that it is now that we need to start this plan to study and set priorities that not only improves access for our own residents but to also be aware of the image that friends and neighbors from across this great nation should have when they visit North Dakota. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony and I encourage your support for HCR 3032 and a "DO PASS" recommendation.

#3

## House Transportation Committee

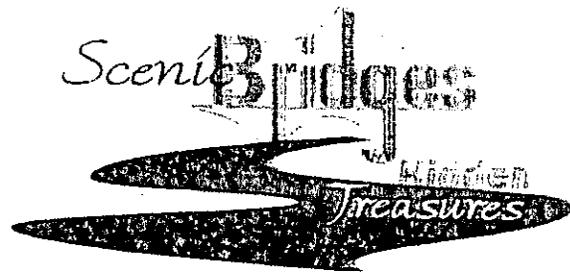
Thursday, February 8, 2011, 10:30 am

Fort Totten Room

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**Blair H. Ihmels, Member - Friends of Lake Sakakawea**  
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*Convention/Visitors Bureau #4*  
*250 Main St Wt – P.O. Box 724*  
*Valley City, ND 58072-0724*  
*(701) 845-1891*  
*www.hellovalley.com*

House Transportation Committee  
Fort Totten Room, State Capital

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

We are asking for your support of House Concurrent Resolution 3032. Please allow the Legislative Management to study the needs of, economic values of, and methods to improve access roadways to recreational, tourist, and historical sites in North Dakota.

The Valley City Area Convention/Visitors Bureau (CVB) at the Rosebud Visitor Center is the gateway to the Sheyenne River Valley National Scenic Byway. We are the source of information for visitors to the area. One of the most sought out sites along the byway is the Standing Rock State Historical Site. Many of our visitors are looking for history of Native Americans in our region. Besides providing state history of the Native Americans, this site has one of the best panoramic views of the Sheyenne River Valley. The problem is that the site is not always accessible due to the condition of the road. We hate to direct visitors to the site if there has been rain the day before, even without being muddy the ruts are hard to navigate without a four wheel drive vehicle.

Tourism is growing in our region. Our CVB's only source of income is the Valley City lodging tax. Our marketing budget has been able to grow due to the increase of tourists in our area. It is important to have access to our recreational amenities to keep the visitors coming.

Please vote in favor of this Resolution to help find a way to improve access to recreational, tourist and historical sites in North Dakota.

Thank you,

Mary Lee Nielson, Marketing Coordinator  
Valley City Visitors Bureau



Sheyenne River Valley National Scenic Byway  
Rosebud Visitor Center  
250 West Main, Street Suite 1  
Valley City, ND 58072  
www.hellovalley.com

#5

February 9, 2011

House Transportation Committee, Fort Totten Room

Chairman Ruby and Committee Members,

We are writing in support of House Concurrent Resolution 3032. Improving access to our statewide amenities is important to our visitors and residents. It is very important to the Sheyenne River Valley National Scenic Byway. Our byway is bringing more visitors to spend time and money in the small towns along the byway. We know that by the increase in collected lodging taxes in the area.

The Sheyenne River Valley National Scenic Byway has been nationally recognized for interpretation. One of our award winning interpretive sites is located alongside the Standing Rock State Historic Site. We rely on the state to make this road passable for visitors. At this point in time we only take busses up to the site during dry weather. This is a prairie road that it sometimes impossible to navigate due to the ruts.

Tourism ranks as one of the top three industries in the state. According to the data we receive from State Tourism about visitor requests for information, byways and historical sites rank at the top most every month. People want to drive and experience the beauty of North Dakota. They want access to the historic sites, recreational and tourist amenities.

Please allow the Legislative Management to study the needs of, economic values of, and methods to improve access roadways to recreational, tourist, and historical sites in North Dakota, vote in favor of House Concurrent Resolution 3032.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bobby Koepplin".

Bobby Koepplin, Chairperson  
Sheyenne River Valley National Scenic Byway Association

*City of Walhalla*  
Pembina County, North Dakota

February 8, 2011

House Transportation Committee,

RE: House Concurrent Resolution No. 3032

On behalf of the City of Walhalla and the Rendezvous Region we are very much in favor of the Resolution No. 3032 directing the Legislative Management to study the needs of the economic values and methods to improve access to roadways to recreational, tourism, and historical sites in North Dakota.

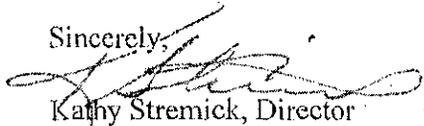
The City of Walhalla and the Rendezvous Region have been working to develop nature based tourism in NE North Dakota. We have the natural resources to become one of the most pristine areas in North Dakota, impacting the entire state, but funds are limited for road improvements and maintenance.

Being able to study and improve the access roads to scenic vista, historical sites, trails heads, and tourism related attractions would greatly enhance our all tourism endeavors and future plans.

We continue to work with the county and township on improving these roadways, but as we all know county and township funding is limited and inadequate, and to review the special road fund needs, guidelines and methods to improve access could greatly enhance the funds usage to many rural communities.

If you have any questions please contact my office at 701-549-2707 or [walhalla@utma.com](mailto:walhalla@utma.com).

Sincerely,



Kathy Stremick, Director  
City of Walhalla  
Walhalla Economic Development Office  
Rendezvous Region Coordinator

**Senate Transportation Committee**

Friday, March 11, 2011, 10:45 am

Lewis and Clark Room

#1

**In support of House Concurrent Resolution #3032  
Michael H. Gunsch, Member - Friends of Lake Sakakawea  
Phone 701-527-2134 (cell)**

Chairman Lee and members of the committee, I'm Michael Gunsch, a member of the Friends of Lake Sakakawea (FOLS) and a registered professional engineer in North Dakota. Funding to construct and improve roadways to recreational, tourist and historical sites in North Dakota is inadequate to meet current and future needs. During the last legislative session the FOLS worked to double the funding to the Special Roads Fund (SRF) established under NDCC 24-02-37. This was accomplished by increasing the contribution rate to the fund, from 40% to 80% of the interest monies earned on State Highway Fund deposits. The results were woefully inadequate to make any meaningful difference due to continuing low interest rates and the amount of funds on deposit.

There was a notable increase in the number of SRF applications in 2009 and again in 2010, as awareness of this program increased through the renewed discussion of such projects and funding needs. Attached to my testimony is a summary of the applications received for these two years and noted funding shortfalls. There are many projects across the state that need funding, however additional applications are likely not forthcoming as there are no meaningful funds available. The eligible costs requested in December 2010 for the SRF program were \$5,889,752. Based on policy, which is based on a 60% construction cost share and the \$250,000 maximum, \$1,434,613 is required to fund these requests. We understand only around \$300,000 is likely to be available, resulting in a shortfall of over one million dollars for 2010. The \$250,000 maximum per project under the current SRF policy also hampers project development where local funds are limited. Since adequate funding is unavailable there are unanswered questions which will be addressed by HCR3032. What are the needs? What is the value of such sites? What is a reasonable level of access and what does that consist of? What level of state and local funding is required to achieve the best results for our state, regional and local areas?

In order to realize the economic benefits associated with the investment these access roadways need to be inventoried and prioritized to document the necessary improvements and their respective values. This can be accomplished using existing information sources including County Engineers, County Park Boards, County Commissioners, local sportsman's groups, state agencies, and others. The study results will provide valuable information for planning and future funding allocations to enhance and develop recreational, tourist and historic sites in North Dakota.

Understand that access roadways improvements are not all destined to transform from dirt trails to pavement. The need might be to upgrade from a dirt trail to gravel road, or from poor gravel to improved gravel, or from gravel to a hardened surface using new gravel stabilization technologies, or from gravel to pavement. All improvements would be based on the existing and projected use, needs of each site and the applicable roadway design standards. Is this a situation of a "Field of Dreams" – "build it and they will come?" No, in many cases people have already visited, left unhappy, and may not or will not return until changes are made. Should we construct access beyond what the demand and use requires? No, but it is clear to many that if access were improved, as is necessary in many locations, use will significantly increase and justify the investment. It is also understood that there will be sites identified that do not require or warrant improvements.

In summary HCR #3032 is a reasonable and appropriate process whereby the State of North Dakota can review and evaluate the need for improving access roadways into recreational, tourist and historic sites. This process is not unlike the recent Northern Great Plains Transportation Institute study that addressed the need for roadway improvements associated with the oil development impacts. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony and I encourage your support for HCR 3032 and a "DO PASS" recommendation.

Attached for your information is a list of the 2009 SRF applications approved April 5, 2010, and the December 17, 2010 SRF applications presently under consideration. I am open to any questions.

**Special Road Fund Committee - Recommended Project List - April 6, 2010**

	<b>Project</b>	<b>Requested</b>	<b>Awarded</b>
1	Kidder Co. - Lake Isabel access road - Reshape and gravel	\$11,850	\$11,850
2	<b>Emmons Co. - Cattail Bay - Reconstruction and paving of access road</b>	<b>\$244,050</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
3	McIntosh Co. - Doyle Memorial State Park - Asphalt overlay	\$170,550	\$170,550
4	NDP&RD - Turtle River St Park - Asphalt overlay on entrance road and seal coat	\$250,000	
5	Barnes Co. - Sibley - Repair asphalt roadway and seal coat	\$6,600	
6	Bottineau Co. - Lake Metigoshe - Seal coat of access roads to cabin sites	\$195,000	
7	Mountrail Co. - Parshall Bay Road - Microsurfacing (repair of roadway surface)	\$184,200	
8	Morton Co. - Harmon Lake - Asphalt paving of access road	\$237,048	
9	McLean co. - Brush Lake Pavilion road - Microsurfacing (repair of roadway surface)	\$58,877	
10	SHSND - Standing Rock Historic Site - Repair access road from ND 46	\$11,971	
11	Williams Co. - Ft Buford - Asphalt overlay of access road	\$72,000	
12	Grafton - Lavergne Ave - Construction of curb & gutter street	\$146,700	
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,162,396</b>	<b>\$282,400</b>

**Funding Shortfall      \$879,996**

## Special Road Fund - December 17, 2010 Applications

	County City Agency	Project	SRF Eligible Costs	SRF Request (1)
1	Bottineau Co.	Lake Metigoshe - Seal coat of some lake area roads	\$114,000	\$68,400
2	Devils Lake	Roosevelt Park - Repair of park roadways	\$139,321	\$83,593
3	Dunn Co.	Dunn Center to Little Missouri Bay access road asphalt overlay	\$1,657,391	\$250,000
4	Emmons Co.	Cattail Bay - Grading, gravelling, and paving access road from ND 1804	\$1,991,862	\$150,000
5	Grafton	Lavergne Avenue - access road to school and athletic fields	\$244,700	\$73,410
6	LaMoure Co.	Lake LaMoure - Seal coat of access road	\$14,350	\$8,610
7	Mercer Co.	Beulah Bay - Asphalt overlay of bay area roads	\$528,468	\$250,000
8	Minnewaukan	Minnewaukan access road to school and athletic fields	\$365,000	\$219,000
9	Morton Co.	Harmon Lake - Paving access road	\$698,660	\$250,000
10	Williams Co.	Missouri Yellowstone Confluence access roads - Hot Bituminous overlay	\$250,000	\$150,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$5,889,752</b>	<b>\$1,434,613</b>

Shortfall based on \$300,000 in available funds

\$1,134,613

Good morning. My name is Bill Mitzel. I publish Dakota Country magazine, a monthly hunting and fishing publication originating here in Bismarck. We've been in business since 1979.

My interest in this concurrent resolution stems from the potential for both economic as well as recreational opportunity. If there's one thing North Dakota leaders have in unison, it's vision. For the very reason we are rural people, we live our daily lives in conjunction with the task of always trying to improve ourselves. Always. We are constantly struggling to make life better for ourselves, our family and our neighbors. We may observe life for the much of the rest of the nation from the view on top of a western North Dakota butte, but we do not forget how we got to that butte... most of the time, on a gravel road. We usually consider the trip worthwhile.

Our roads are our lifeline to most everything here in North Dakota. It's a farm-to-market trail, a route to medical treatment, a link to the business community. But our roads are also our connection to recreation, a pursuit that nearly one of every three people in this state enjoys on a regular basis.

As an agricultural community, we understandably place vital importance on that business. Our agriculture industry serves not only North Dakota, but the world. And the link to that world is our roads. Without them, we are out of business.

Paving key passages in our state should be looked at through the window of economic development. Yes, it might be considered handy, practical, even luxurious to have pavement to our favorite hunting or fishing spot. But, as visionaries, we're drawn toward a deeper result, one that would, in the end, produce more economic development as more and more people use these roads to get to those recreational destinations. In getting there, and after arriving there, they will contribute to the economic pool in greater fashion, giving all of us an improved financial base. In other words, it's evident that paved roads in key recreational areas will pay for itself. It will expand access to our existing and abundant recreational opportunities.

Having lived here all my life, I'm keenly aware of our majestic outdoor resources. I've watched them being developed and expanded by visionaries like the late Dale Henegar, the state's first fisheries chief, the long-term veteran of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department who endured a fair amount of ridicule for some of his visionary introductions. Without people like him, I would not be standing here before you today.

I'm not certain anything I say here today will make a difference, but I do believe in who we are and what we have as North Dakotans. I am so grateful I live here. Our recreational resources are second to none, and the continued development of our infrastructure would continue to enhance those resources. I think it's vitally important to everyone, both inside and outside the recreational loop.

Thank you for your time today.

Bill Mitzel  
Publisher, Dakota Country Magazine  
Bismarck

Testimony on HCR 3032  
Senate Transportation Committee  
Emanuel Stroh

# 3

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee.  
My name is Emanuel Stroh, Dunn County Director for Friends of Lake Sakakawea and Chairman of McKenzie Bay Marine Club.

I am here to testify for paving our roads to our great lake. There are roads that are in dire need of improvements.

I know of tourists, campers and boaters that won't use our recreation area because of the rough, dusty and unsafe roads. Having been in the recreation business for 30 years, I know what it is like to pull an expensive boat or camper down these roads. It's not very pleasant.

Our counties are strapped right now for funding because of all the infrastructure that needs to be done because of all of the oil activity.

We need your help to get this accomplished. Every campground or recreation area that has paved roads is filled almost every weekend. So this should tell us something.

There are public use areas with nice campgrounds, boat ramps, fish cleaning stations, concessions and full public facilities and the roads are sometimes impassable.

Passage of HCR 3032 will help us all improve a road that is in badly need of improvements.

Thank you for your time and consideration

*Emanuel Stroh*

# 4

**Senate Transportation Committee**

Friday, March 11, 2011, 10:45 am  
Lewis & Clark Room

**In support of House Concurrent Resolution #3032  
Blair H. Ihmels, Member - Friends of Lake Sakakawea  
Phone 701-222-4259**

Good Morning, I'm Blair Ihmels, a member of the Friends of Lake Sakakawea (FOLS). I live in Bismarck and own a recreational home in Riverdale, North Dakota. I was raised on a farm in the northwest corner of the state just south of Bowbells and it was there that I learned about recreation in the outdoors and wash board roads. After high school I traveled to Bismarck for college and met and married a girl from the southeast corner of the state. We struck out as a young family in the 80's to explore Lake Sakakawea and the Missouri River. We would travel to camping locations like Wolf Creek on the south east shore, Indian Hills, Deep Water Bay and Lund's Landing on the north shore and Beulah bay on the south shore. Most of those destinations were often at the end of a dusty, washboard and bumpy road. My passion for outdoor activities around our state has not been limited to just Lake Sakakawea but includes every corner and a multitude of recreation opportunities.

Through those experiences I now have a mature understanding of our challenges to encourage our future generations to enjoy the passions that I dearly love. Some of those include an investment to improve access to our rich natural resources. Believing that it is now that we need to start this plan to study and set priorities that not only improves access for our own residents but to also be aware of the image that friends and neighbors from across this great nation should have when they visit North Dakota. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony and I encourage your support for HCR 3032 and a "DO PASS" recommendation.

# City of Walhalla

*Pembina County, North Dakota*

March 9, 2011

Senate Transportation Committee,

RE: HCR 3032

Senator Lee,

On behalf of the City of Walhalla and the Rendezvous Region we are very much in favor of the HCR 3032 directing the Legislative Management to study the needs of the economic values and methods to improve access to roadways to recreational, tourism, and historical sites in North Dakota.

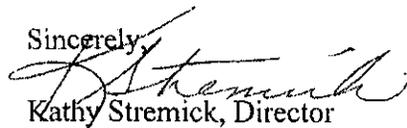
The City of Walhalla and the Rendezvous Region have been working to develop nature based tourism in NE North Dakota. We have the natural resources to become one of the most pristine areas in North Dakota, impacting the entire state, but funds are limited for road improvements and maintenance.

Being able to study and improve the access roads to scenic vista, historical sites, trails heads, and tourism related attractions would greatly enhance our all tourism endeavors and future plans.

We continue to work with the county and township on improving these roadways, but as we all know county and township funding is limited and inadequate, and to review the special road fund needs, guidelines and methods to improve access could greatly enhance the funds usage to many rural communities.

If you have any questions please contact my office at 701-549-2707 or [walhalla@utma.com](mailto:walhalla@utma.com)

Sincerely,



Kathy Stremick, Director

City of Walhalla

Walhalla Economic Development Office

Rendezvous Region Coordinator



*Convention/Visitors Bureau  
250 Main St Wt – P.O. Box 724  
Valley City, ND 58072-0724  
(701) 845-1891  
[www.hellovalley.com](http://www.hellovalley.com)*

Senate Transportation Committee  
Lewis & Clark Room, State Capital

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

We are asking for your support of House Concurrent Resolution 3032. Please allow the Legislative Management to study the needs of, economic values of, and methods to improve access roadways to recreational, tourist, and historical sites in North Dakota.

The Valley City Area Convention/Visitors Bureau (CVB) at the Rosebud Visitor Center is the gateway to the Sheyenne River Valley National Scenic Byway. We are the source of information for visitors to the area. One of the most sought out sites along the byway is the Standing Rock State Historical Site. Many of our visitors are looking for history of Native Americans in our region. Besides providing state history of the Native Americans, this site has one of the best panoramic views of the Sheyenne River Valley. The problem is that the site is not always accessible due to the condition of the road. We hate to direct visitors to the site if there has been rain the day before, even without being muddy the ruts are hard to navigate without a four wheel drive vehicle.

Tourism is growing in our region. Our CVB's only source of income is the Valley City lodging tax. Our marketing budget has been able to grow due to the increase of tourists in our area. It is important to have access to our recreational amenities to keep the visitors coming.

Please vote in favor of this Resolution to help find a way to improve access to recreational, tourist and historical sites in North Dakota.

Thank you,

Mary Lee Nielson, Marketing Coordinator  
Valley City Visitors Bureau



Sheyenne River Valley National Scenic Byway  
Rosebud Visitor Center  
250 West Main, Street Suite 1  
Valley City, ND 58072  
[www.hellovalley.com](http://www.hellovalley.com)

February 9, 2011

Senate Transportation Committee, Lewis & Clark Room

Chairman Lee and Committee Members,

We are writing in support of House Concurrent Resolution 3032. Improving access to our statewide amenities is important to our visitors and residents. It is very important to the Sheyenne River Valley National Scenic Byway. Our byway is bringing more visitors to spend time and money in the small towns along the byway. We know that by the increase in collected lodging taxes in the area.

The Sheyenne River Valley National Scenic Byway has been nationally recognized for interpretation. One of our award winning interpretive sites is located alongside the Standing Rock State Historic Site. We rely on the state to make this road passable for visitors. At this point in time we only take busses up to the site during dry weather. This is a prairie road that it sometimes impossible to navigate due to the ruts.

Tourism ranks as one of the top three industries in the state. According to the data we receive from State Tourism about visitor requests for information, byways and historical sites rank at the top most every month. People want to drive and experience the beauty of North Dakota. They want access to the historic sites, recreational and tourist amenities.

Please allow the Legislative Management to study the needs of, economic values of, and methods to improve access roadways to recreational, tourist, and historical sites in North Dakota, vote in favor of House Concurrent Resolution 3032.

Sincerely,

Bobby Koeplin, Chairperson  
Sheyenne River Valley National Scenic Byway Association