

**Fifty-fifth Legislative Assembly, State of North Dakota, begun in the
Capitol in the City of Bismarck, on Monday, the sixth day of January,
one thousand nine hundred and ninety-seven**

SENATE BILL NO. 2182
(Senators Wanzek, Tomac)
(Representatives D. Johnson, Renner)

AN ACT to amend and reenact sections 6-09.10-03 and 6-09.10-10 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to extension of the expiration date of the agricultural mediation service; to repeal sections 6-09.10-08.1, 6-09.10-08.2, 6-09.10-08.3, 6-09.10-08.4, 6-09.10-08.5, and 6-09.10-08.6 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to legal and tax assistance for farmers and small businesses; and to declare an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

SECTION 1. AMENDMENT. Section 6-09.10-03 of the 1995 Supplement to the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

6-09.10-03. North Dakota agricultural mediation service - Powers - Compensation and expenses - Fees. The board shall meet at the call of the chair, as is necessary to fulfill its duties under this chapter. The department of agriculture shall administer the agricultural mediation service. The commissioner of agriculture shall establish an agricultural mediation service to disseminate information to farmers concerning farm credit problems and to provide assistance to seek to resolve farm credit problems. The commissioner shall appoint an administrator of the agricultural mediation service. The commissioner shall hire staff, negotiators, and mediators who may mediate disputes involving farmers and others, either of whom may request assistance. The board may charge the farmer and others a reasonable fee for any assistance provided, such funds to be used to continue the service until June 30, ~~1997~~ 1999. Fees charged to the farmer's creditors are limited to twenty-five dollars per hour, each, for the time spent in mediation sessions. The board shall adopt policies governing the negotiators, staff, and mediators hired under this section. Board members are entitled to receive sixty-five dollars for each day of official service, as directed by the board. The board members are entitled to expenses as provided in sections 44-08-04 and 54-06-09. The expenses provided under this section may be paid from any funds available in the home-quarter purchase fund.

SECTION 2. AMENDMENT. Section 6-09.10-10 of the 1995 Supplement to the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

6-09.10-10. Mediation - Open records and meetings exception. Information created, collected, and maintained by the agricultural mediation service in the course of any formal or informal mediation is confidential and is not subject to the open records requirements of section 44-04-18. Such information may be released only upon written consent of all parties to the mediation or pursuant to an order issued by the court upon a showing of good cause. All mediation meetings and meetings involving the board, staff, negotiators, or mediators wherein the finances of specific farmers, creditors, and others are discussed, are confidential, closed meetings and are not subject to the open meetings requirements of section 44-04-19.

SECTION 3. REPEAL. Sections 6-09.10-08.1, 6-09.10-08.2, 6-09.10-08.3, 6-09.10-08.4, and 6-09.10-08.6 of the North Dakota Century Code and section 6-09.10-08.5 of the 1995 Supplement to the North Dakota Century Code are repealed.

SECTION 4. EMERGENCY. This Act is declared to be an emergency measure.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

Secretary of the Senate

Chief Clerk of the House

This certifies that the within bill originated in the Senate of the Fifty-fifth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota and is known on the records of that body as Senate Bill No. 2182 and that two-thirds of the members-elect of the Senate voted in favor of said law.

Vote: Yeas 46 Nays 0 Absent 3

President of the Senate

Secretary of the Senate

This certifies that two-thirds of the members-elect of the House of Representatives voted in favor of said law.

Vote: Yeas 82 Nays 9 Absent 6

Speaker of the House

Chief Clerk of the House

Received by the Governor at _____ M. on _____, 1997.

Approved at _____ M. on _____, 1997.

Governor

Filed in this office this _____ day of _____, 1997,

at ___ o'clock _____ M.

Secretary of State