



WESTERN DAKOTA ENERGY ASSOCIATION

February 1, 2021

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Testimony of:
Geoff Simon, Lobbyist #144
in support of HB 1431
House Appropriations Committee

Chairman Delzer and Committee members:

On behalf of the city, county and school district members of the Western Dakota Energy Association (WDEA), we wish to express our strong support for House Bill 1431 to generate additional revenue to address some of the state's pressing infrastructure needs. WDEA believes it is prudent to issue bonds at a time when interest rates are near historic lows, with repayment assured through the predictable revenue generated by earnings from the Legacy Fund. Importantly, the legislation would provide funding for previous commitments to major water and flood control projects, freeing up dollars in the Resources Trust Fund to address other infrastructure projects needed throughout the state.

HB 1431 also generates revenue to support career and technical education facilities, which will address significant workforce recruitment and training needs in western North Dakota. Drilling activity has slowed during the past year, but we all know the industry will rebound because oil is an essential commodity that we will need for decades to come. Producing that oil will require people, so it's prudent to invest in facilities that will attract, educate and train the workers we will need to grow and maintain crude oil and natural gas production.

WDEA appreciates the legislation's commitment to provide additional revenue to construct and improve transportation infrastructure. Given the state's pressing needs, particularly the need to address safety improvements on Highway 85 and other major corridors in western North Dakota, we would like to suggest an even larger bond issuance to accelerate work on these vital arteries that support commerce in the Bakken.

WDEA also appreciates the bill's commitment to the Western Area Water Supply Authority, specifically the repayment of loans issued to WAWSA from the Resources Trust Fund. This not only provides the fund with additional revenue to support other projects, it relieves the authority of the financial burden with which it has struggled for several years.

Please support HB 1431 to provide additional revenue to meet North Dakota's growing infrastructure needs. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.