

**Testimony by Allen Heiser, Stark County**

On behalf of the

**Southwest Pipeline Project**

to the

**Senate Appropriations Committee**

**Hearing on House Bill 1020**

Monday, March 22, 2021

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Allen (Al) Heiser. I live north of Dickinson on a ranch and work as Stark County's Road Superintendent. I am submitting this testimony to ask for your continued funding support of the Southwest Pipeline Project (SWPP); a water project which is crucial not only for the quality of life in southwest North Dakota, but the livelihoods of its residents. Without SWPP's reliability and life-saving waters – our livestock would suffer and rural county roads would start coming apart.

I am fortunate to be connected to the SWPP as a customer of Southwest Water Authority (SWA). I am also dependent on its quality water staying reliable. My 100 head of livestock remain healthy and even their teeth are stronger due to the fluoride used in SWA's water treatment. It means funding for maintenance and repairs of the SWPP must continue and needed infrastructure built as I have no other good options to access safe drinking water for my home or to water my cattle should the pipeline not be maintained or replacements constructed as needed.

On the job, I work in road maintenance which with the drought the county has been experiencing, is causing the roads to literally fall apart. Gravel is raveling out of the dirt roads and Stark County has been purchasing water from SWA to wet down the roads to get them back into shape. Even though the county has access to local creeks and rivers, there is a fear that using the limited water supply they offer could harm local ranchers and farmers that rely on the waters – especially during a drought.

While many of the rural residents of the southwest area are now receiving safe, high-quality water, funding must be made available to replace and repair existing lines. There are also hundreds of people waiting to be connected using salt-laden groundwater wells or hauling in water. It all adds up to why I strongly support the continued funding of the SWPP as too many people and too many lives are depending on its waters for their livelihoods and health.

Respectfully,  
Allen Heiser