

# In Support of HB 1431 with Senate Amendment

Mikkelson Township, LaMoure County  
Income from 2007 to present

Year	General Fund Taxes	Road Tax Redistribution Fund	State Aid	Additional State Aid	Total State Aid	Total Funds Available
2007	7726.17	3198.97	1122.86	0	1122.86	12048
2008	7750.23	3256.04	1321.64	0	1321.64	12327.91
2009	8079.4	3215.85	1335.17	0	1335.17	12630.42
2010	8864.9	3439.75	1444.22	0	1444.22	13748.87
2011	13553.98	3780.25	1896.49	8369.16	10265.65	27599.88
2012	13663.07	4674.05	2625.42	15653.05	18278.47	36615.59
2013	17079.53	5465.73	3086.94	29731.97	32818.91	55364.17
2014	17091.88	5791.56	2977.89	0	2977.89	25861.33
2015	18107.58	6205.7	3123.38	10000	13123.38	37436.66
2016	23961.75	5254.89	2248.64	4990.89	7239.53	36456.17
2017	18326.45	5201.2	2049.16	0	2049.16	25576.81
2018	17654	5400	2271.34	0	2271.34	25325.34
2019	18139.85	5388.57	2582.74	5000	7582.74	31111.16
2020	20680.55	4667.55	2354.03	0	2354.03	27702.13

In 2020, Mikkelson Township levied 18 mills, the maximum allowed by law without holding a special election. Under non-emergency conditions, the maximum levy allowed through special election is 36 mills for 5 years. In 2011, Mikkelson Township approved an increased mill levy, and you see the higher general fund taxes through 2016. We have allowed the increased mill levy to expire and have been trying to maintain our roads without going back to the increased levy.

Township roads were mostly built for the loads they carried in the 50's and 60's. They fall short of handling the semi tractor-trailer traffic commonplace today. As townships, we are challenged to do our best with the money at our disposal.

In Mikkelson Township:

- Total funds available for 2020 was \$27,702.13 (taxing at 18 mills)
- Our 5 year average blading cost is \$12,453.60.
- That leaves \$15,248.53 for everything else.
- If we taxed at the maximum 36 mills, that amount would be \$35,929.08.

A common practice for us is to gravel at a rate of 240 yards per mile, approximately 1/2" of gravel. With our 2021 gravel cost of \$13.60/yd, that's \$3264/mile.

- Mikkelson Township certifies 31 miles of road for the Road Tax Redistribution Fund administered through the State Treasurer.
- At 18 mills we can gravel just over 4.5 miles at 240 yds/mile.
- 36 mills would let us gravel 11 miles at 240 yds/mile.
- The most gravel any road can receive is 1/2" every 3 years, at the maximum tax rate allowed.
- UGPTI recommends 3" of gravel every 5 years.

We still have not allowed anything for culverts, repairs, or reconditioning the roads.

Pulling the shoulders of a gravel road works wonders for improving its serviceability at a fraction of the cost of rebuilding the road. The cost is roughly \$6500/mile, which includes a minimum application of gravel. A good practice would be to pull shoulders every 10-15 years, as use pushes out on the road shoulder and flattens the road. Mikkelson could accomplish that by doing 2 miles a year, at a cost of \$13,000. That \$13,000 cuts into an already marginal re-graveling program.

What I have hoped to demonstrate here is that even with good luck and good management, we still have difficulty maintaining our road systems adequately. The best we can accomplish is a bare minimum, and we cannot get ahead of the game with the funds normally available.

What really becomes problematic is when some special project is required.

NDDOT Director Bill Panos has talked to townships about his vision of one, single, integrated transportation system. In the oil patch or in farm country, every truckload needs to be able to use the state, county, and township roads. The road system is vital to our economy. The NDDOT has the expertise to partner with townships to realize that vision of a single system. Currently, NDDOT is not allowed to help, even when safety is at stake.

In Germania Township in Stutsman County, 3 miles west of Gackle on State Hwy 46, there is a stretch where both Hwy 46 and a township road went under water in 2020. FEMA would provide funding for the township to raise their road, but they were unable to come up with the required matching funds.

In Island Park Township in Ransom County, just south of Lisbon on the Sheyenne River, there is a bridge on a township road which leads to 5 homes. That bridge was recently restricted to 10 tons. The school bus can no longer cross it, and the fire department has also said they cannot cross it with a fire truck. Residents have been notified that they may not be able to insure their homes. The township has decided that their best option is to build a road out the other direction, but is at a loss as to how to proceed, or how to pay for it.

Grandview Township in LaMoure County has a road next to where the James River is eating away at the river bank and is closing in on the road. They have been approved for safety funding to stabilize the river bank, but their share of the matching funds and engineering costs is over \$60,000.

These are all examples of where, if the NDDOT were allowed to help, and had funding available for those purposes, they could use their expertise to provide a solution to a struggling township.

HB 1431 as amended provides \$10 million directly to non-oil producing townships according to the miles they certify with the State Treasurer. Townships with more miles of road would receive more dollars. We support the idea that more should go where the need is greater.

It also authorizes the NDDOT to work with townships in developing their roads, and provides \$20 million to that end. That money can be used to leverage federal or other dollars, with which the DOT can partner with townships to develop solutions, again where the need is greatest.

The North Dakota Township Officers Association, on behalf of our nearly 6,000 member township officers, urges you to recommend approval of HB 1431 as amended, providing much needed funding for township roads, and authorizing the NDDOT to work with townships to realize the goal of one, single, safe, integrated transportation system.

Tim Geinert  
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Mikkelson Township, Clerk/Treasurer  
LaMoure County Highway Dept., Assistant Road Superintendent and Motor Grader Operator