

Testimony Prepared for the  
**Senate Finance & Taxation Committee**

Wednesday, March 17, 2021

By: Genny Dienstmann, NDACo

NDACE Executive Director



*North Dakota  
Association of  
County Engineers*

**RE: Engrossed House Bill 1380**

Chair Bell and members of the Senate Finance & Taxation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1380. I am Genny Dienstmann with the ND Association of Counties and I also serve as Executive Director of our member association, the North Dakota Association of County Engineers and Highway Superintendents.

County and state government have many challenges keeping up with the demands of improving and maintaining our statewide transportation system. County road levies across the state currently total about \$60 million annually, with a similar amount distributed from the State Highway Distribution Fund. In addition, counties receive federal funding from the DOT of approximately \$12 million per year. Counties have an estimated \$132 million per year to meet infrastructure needs. Compare that to county and township need totals from the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute Study, the total is about \$466 million per year; this is a difference of \$334 million annually.

In prior legislative sessions, a portion of these needs were met with 'surge' funding. This one-time funding was an immense benefit in assisting counties with road projects. Counties were hopeful the Operation Prairie Dog funding would have provided a more consistent funding source, but in the short term, this is not likely. While we acknowledge the House removed the Highway Distribution Fund as a recipient of the Legacy Fund interest earnings; we respectfully request consideration to restore this funding mechanism for transportation needs.

As maintenance and construction costs continue to rise each year, your consideration of supporting funding options for transportation infrastructure now would be beneficial to local and state government. Transportation is what connects our citizens and economy to our neighborhoods and across the state.

What better legacy than to provide funding that can sustain and rebuild our highway and bridge networks for future generations. Thank you again for the opportunity to support HB 1380.