



North Dakota House Bill 1452

Testimony of Stacey Dahl – Minnkota Power Cooperative
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
March 19, 2021

Chairman Kreun and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1452. By way of background, I work as Senior Manager of External Affairs for Minnkota Power Cooperative, headquartered in Grand Forks. Minnkota is a non-profit electricity generation and transmission cooperative and is the sole supplier of electricity for eleven non-profit cooperative distribution companies and the operating agent for Northern Municipal Power Agency which serves twelve small cities in eastern North Dakota and northwest Minnesota. Minnkota serves approximately 140,000 customers over a 35,000 square mile area.

In recent years, I have also had the privilege of serving on the leadership team working to develop Project Tundra. Tundra is a bold initiative to build the world's largest carbon capture facility in North Dakota, and represents a vision for our state's energy future, consistent with the goals of HB 1452. The project is exploring innovative technologies that are in their final engineering phase, and if constructed, would capture approximately 90% of the CO₂ emissions from our largest coal unit at the Milton R. Young Station. Plans are also in the works to capture additional CO₂ emissions from the adjacent smaller generating unit, and as a result, 4 million metric tons of CO₂ would be captured and sequestered annually. For context, that has the equivalent emissions reduction of permanently taking over 800,000 gas-powered vehicles off the road. While Minnkota is spearheading this effort, this project would not be at this stage of development without the tremendous state and federal support provided, as well as expertise by the Energy and Environmental Research Center at University of North Dakota. The project remains promising, yet there are critical challenges remaining.

Through years of research and development, leading scientists and geologists have gained very high confidence in our ability to safely capture and store large volumes of CO₂ through Project Tundra. However, the project still has to overcome hurdles before a decision can be made to move forward with construction. Carbon capture utilization and storage projects are complex as well as capital and risk intensive. Financing the project, as well as contending with the anti-fossil fuel movement more broadly, will provide challenges in the coming year. However, there is broad bipartisan support for carbon capture projects, recognizing they are critical to a carbon managed future. HB 1452 is a positive step to streamline the effort and resources to help projects commercialize – and realize our state's role as a world leader in clean energy technology development.

Minnkota Power Cooperative supports HB 1452, and encourages the Committee to recommend a Do Pass on this bill.