

Senate Energy & Transportation Committee

Chairman – Senator Curt Kruen

Testimony

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HCR 3034

Good morning, Chairman Kruen and members of the Committee.

I'm Paul Pitner, and I am a member of the Minot City Council. Thank you for allowing me to appear before you today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 3034.

Since 2008, Minot has been a regional source of reliable, clean drinking water for many neighboring communities, including Kenmare, Berthold, Burlington, Sherwood, Des Lacs, Mohall, and Minot Air Force Base, as well as several commercial water suppliers.

That list of communities with access to clean drinking water will continue to grow when the Northwest Area Water Supply project is completed and water from Lake Sakakawea is utilized; to this point, the City of Minot has been providing water to our neighbors, but the continued drawdown of Minot's aquifers is not a sustainable long-term solution.

That's where NAWS comes in. Completing this project has been a long time coming for everyone involved.

NAWS was created in 1991. Construction began in 2002. A lawsuit by Manitoba was also filed in 2002. In 2017, a federal court ruled that NAWS could continue. Manitoba and the State of Missouri appealed that 2017 ruling, which led to a

settlement. In 2019, a court finally ended years of litigation and ruled that NAWS could proceed.

This project was intended to be funded on a cost-share basis, with 65% of the funds coming from federal sources and 35% coming from local funding. During the 17 years the project was held up in court, the State Water Commission has helped advance court-allowed portions of the project with state funds, and the City of Minot has covered the local share through a 1 percent city sales tax.

The international agreement with Manitoba required a biota treatment facility be built near Max. Construction is scheduled to start this spring, with an expected completion date of the end of 2023.

NAWS is vital for the long-term growth of north central North Dakota. We support the state of North Dakota's request that the federal government honor its obligation to fully fund the mandated biota treatment plant near Max.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the importance of HCCR 3034. On behalf of the Minot City Council, the City of Minot, and the communities we already serve with water, I urge you to support this resolution.

Thank you.