

MICROFILM DIVIDER

OMB/RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION
SFN 2053 (2/85) 5M



ROLL NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

2314

2007 SENATE TRANSPORTATION

SB 2314

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. SB 2314

Senate Transportation Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: January 26, 2007

Recorder Job Number: 2059

Committee Clerk Signature

Jody Hauge

Minutes:

Senator Lee opened the hearing on SB 2314 relating to motor vehicle registration fees and funding of public transportation; and to provide notice of fee increases.

There were five committee members present and one absent.

Senator Nething, from district 12 introduced SB 2314 and gave testimony in support of the bill. He said that the bill increased the registration fee from three dollars to six dollars for each motor vehicle registered. The fee must be deposited with the state treasurer, who shall credit the fee to the public transportation fund. In lines 21-24 he talked about the distribution and the distribution formula is increased in the same ratio as the three dollar increase. On page 2, section 3 the intent is to have on the registration card a notice that three dollars goes to public transportation services. He believes that the motor vehicle owners are entitled to know why this registration fee is being increased.

Senator Fiebiger, senator from district 45 and co-sponsor, testified in support of SB 2314.

(Written testimony)

Mike Williams, Fargo City Commissioner testified in support of SB 2314. He presented the testimony of Jim Gilmour, Director of Planning and Development from Fargo. (Written testimony)

Senator Lee said that when he has been in Fargo he sees that there is quite a bit of space on the bus and it isn't being consumed. He asked Mr. Williams what they are doing to improve that so the seats are full.

Mr. Williams answered that they have to work with peak times. When growing the transit you have to service and plan for the peak time. Sometimes you will see a bus stop and pick up one person the next time that stop might fill the bus. You have to plan for the peak if you are going to service your riders. Part of the appropriation is so they can add a frequency to routes and also add routes so people can depend more on transit and not just incidental for a day when their car is working. A goal he thinks they can attain with appropriations is to double frequency and routes in the next five years.

Senator Lee asked if everyone paid the same.

Mr. Williams said that they had a reduced rate for handicap and they can also buy a reduced monthly bus pass.

Robin Werre, director of Bis-ManTransit Board of Bismarck testified in support of SB 2314.

(Written Testimony)

Senator Potter asked why she talked about a 3 year period. Is that Federal money.

Robin Werre replied yes, and that they have money from 2004, 2005 and 2006.

Senator Lee asked how their ridership was in the past few years.

Robin Werre replied that the CAT system is new, it was started in 2004. The ridership is increasing every year. We are up about 17,000 in 2006 from 2005. She said their consultants tell them that it will take at least 5 years in operation to really get the riders out there. She wishes more people would ride it to the capitol because it goes right through the capitol grounds.

Carol Anderson, director of West River Transit spoke in favor of SB 2314. Written testimony enclosed.

Senator Lee asked what the cost was if he was to ride their bus.

Carol Anderson answered that it varied anywhere from \$5. to \$7. Per trip. Most of their ridership is the elderly and disabled. To get to the grocery store or around town it is usually a dollar.

James Moench, Executive Director of the NDDAC spoke in favor of SB 2314. Written testimony enclosed.

Wayne Triska, a teacher and Orientation and Mobility Specialist for students with vision impairments spoke in favor of SB 2314. Written testimony enclosed.

Darcy Andahl, Bismarck spoke in favor of SB 2314. Written testimony enclosed.

Leon Dietrich, Bismarck testified in favor of SB 2314. Written testimony enclosed.

Tom Alexander, Project Director for the ND Medicaid Infrastructure Grant/Comprehensive Employment System Initiative with the ND Center for Person with Disabilities at Minot State University, presented testimony in support of SB 2314. Written testimony enclosed.

Senator Potter asked if there was any consideration to just seeking the funding whether than having this mechanism. Did you ever think about just going after the surplus?

Mr. Alexander answered no; he really didn't have anything to do with the bill.

Senator Nething said that they started out with this being just a fee...taking out of general fund has not been acceptable in the past but raising fees have.

Christina McComish testified in favor of SB 2314. Written testimony enclosed.

Paul Grindeland, Director of Transportation at Fargo Senior Services spoke in support of SB 2314. Written testimony enclosed.

Esther Leser sent a letter in support of SB 2314.

No opposing testimony.

No neutral testimony.

Senator Lee closed the hearing at 10:45AM.

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. SB 2314

Senate Transportation Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: February 1, 2007

Recorder Job Number: 2314

Committee Clerk Signature

Jody Range

Minutes:

Senator Lee opened discussion on SB 2314 relating to motor vehicle registration fees and funding of public transportation; and to provide notice of fee increases.

Senator Lee said the registration fee was created in 1989 at one dollar. In 1999 the registration fee went to two dollars. In 2005 it went to three dollars.

Senator Nething said the reason the bill is at three dollars is because that is what they are losing in Federal grants. Senator Nething said those figures are what he used to put the bill together.

Senator Lee gave the impacts of what a three dollar increase would be 3.3 million; a one dollar increase would be 1.6 million.

Senator Nething said not only are they losing Federal grants but they are also increasing usage.

Senator Fiebiger said that this money would also help them access other federal funds that they wouldn't be able to access without the money.

Senator Lee moved an amendment that would change the increase from six dollars to four dollars. He felt doubling the registration was too much and in the past when this way of funding had been accessed they had raised the fee a dollar at a time. Proposed amendment attached.

The motion died from lack of a second.

Senator Nething moved for a Do Pass on SB 2314 and refer to Appropriations.

Senator Fiebiger seconded.

Senator Lee asked the clerk to call the roll. 4-1-1

Senator Nething will carry SB 2314.

FISCAL NOTE
 Requested by Legislative Council
 01/17/2007

Bill/Resolution No.: SB 2314

1A. State fiscal effect: *Identify the state fiscal effect and the fiscal effect on agency appropriations compared to funding levels and appropriations anticipated under current law.*

	2005-2007 Biennium		2007-2009 Biennium		2009-2011 Biennium	
	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds
Revenues				\$4,700,000		\$4,700,000
Expenditures				\$4,700,000		\$4,700,000
Appropriations				\$4,700,000		\$4,700,000

1B. County, city, and school district fiscal effect: *Identify the fiscal effect on the appropriate political subdivision.*

2005-2007 Biennium			2007-2009 Biennium			2009-2011 Biennium		
Counties	Cities	School Districts	Counties	Cities	School Districts	Counties	Cities	School Districts
			\$4,700,000			\$4,700,000		

2A. Bill and fiscal impact summary: *Provide a brief summary of the measure, including description of the provisions having fiscal impact (limited to 300 characters).*

This bill increases the public transportation fee from \$3 to \$6 for each motor vehicle registered. The bill provides for the distribution of these funds by the NDDOT to the counties for transportation purposes.

B. Fiscal impact sections: *Identify and provide a brief description of the sections of the measure which have fiscal impact. Include any assumptions and comments relevant to the analysis.*

This bill amends NDCC 39-04.2-03 and 39-04.2-04 to provide for an increase to the public transportation fee of \$3 per motor vehicle registered. The bill also provides for the distribution of these funds by the NDDOT to the counties for transportation purposes.

3. State fiscal effect detail: *For information shown under state fiscal effect in 1A, please:*

A. Revenues: *Explain the revenue amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each revenue type and fund affected and any amounts included in the executive budget.*

Increasing the public transportation fee to \$6 from \$3 will generate approximately \$4.7 million in additional revenue per biennium. This revenue will initially go to the NDDOT. Subsequently, the DOT will distribute the revenue to the counties as specified in NDCC 39-04.2-04.

B. Expenditures: *Explain the expenditure amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each agency, line item, and fund affected and the number of FTE positions affected.*

The DOT's expenditures would increase \$4.7 million per biennium as the DOT distributed the additional revenue to the counties in accordance with Section 2 of the bill.

C. Appropriations: *Explain the appropriation amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each agency and fund affected. Explain the relationship between the amounts shown for expenditures and appropriations. Indicate whether the appropriation is also included in the executive budget or relates to a continuing appropriation.*

To accommodate the additional distribution to the counties as specified in Section 2 of the bill, the NDDOT would require an additional \$4.7 million appropriation.

Name:	Shannon L. Sauer	Agency:	NDDOT
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Phone Number: 328-4375

Date Prepared: 01/19/2007

Date: 2-1-06

Roll Call Vote #: ~~4-1-0~~

4-1-0

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 2314

Senate Transportation Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken do pass refer to appropriation

Motion Made By Senator Nething Seconded By Senator Fiebiger

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Chairman Gary Lee		✓	Senator JoNell Bakke	✓	
V Ch John Andrist			Senator Tom Fiebiger	✓	
Senator Dave Nething	✓		Senator Tracy Potter	✓	

Total (Yes) 4 No 1

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Senator Nething

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
February 2, 2007 10:49 a.m.

Module No: SR-22-1931
Carrier: Nething
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2314: Transportation Committee (Sen. G. Lee, Chairman) recommends DO PASS and BE REREFERRED to the Appropriations Committee (4 YEAS, 1 NAY, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2314 was rereferred to the Appropriations Committee.

2007 SENATE APPROPRIATIONS

SB 2314

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 2314

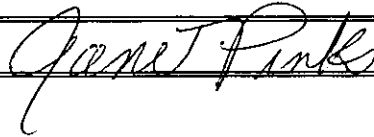
Senate Appropriations Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 02-13-07

Recorder Job Number: 3452

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Chairman Holmberg opened the hearing on SB 2314.

Senator Dave Nething, District 12, Jamestown, introduced SB 2314 regarding motor vehicle registration fee increase from \$3.00 to \$6.00. It also requires the registration is increased and applies to public transportation services.

Senator Christmann asked if there was someone to respond as to how this is handled. The response was it is a distribution issue.

Senator Christmann indicated that when you trade in vehicles, the plates go with the vehicle, now if you buy and new vehicle and pay the \$6.00 then trade it in is there a refund.

Ken Toupa, representing the ND Senior Service Providers, Dakota Senior Service Providers, testified indicating the bill proposes an increase of the fee. That money is used predominately in public transportation and predominately that is available for rural providers. Urban providers can access dollars directly from the federal government. The funds are used on a 50-50 or an 80-20 match. Mr. Toupa distributed statistics for all public transportation (1) and contact information of senior service providers (2).

Jim Gilmour, Director, Planning and Development, Fargo, presented written testimony (3) in support of SB 2314 indicating the public transportation is an essential public service to urban

and rural areas and how it enables people to live independently in their homes longer. He discussed what had been received in the past from state and federal funds.

Paul Grindeland, Director, Transportation, Fargo Senior Services, presented written testimony (4) and testified in support of SB 2314. He indicated there is a continuing need to expand services, a need for local match of federal funds, transit coordination projects and drivers wages and recruitment.

Robin Werre, Director, Bis-Man Transit Board, Bismarck, presented written testimony (5) and testified in support of SB 2314 indicating they operate a public transit for elderly 60 years of age or older servicing 8900 riders. She then discussed their budget including state and federal funds.

Darrell Francis, Director, Souris Basin Transportation, Minot, presented written testimony (6) and testified in support of SB 2314 indicating their system operates in an eight county area servicing approximately 36,000 passengers. He discussed their budget including state and federal funds.

Leon Dietrich, Custodian, Bismarck Public Schools, presented written testimony (7) and testified in support of SB 2314 indicating he uses the transit system and CAT bus on a daily basis and he strongly supports the services public transportation provides.

James M. Moench, Executive Director, ND Disabilities Advocacy Consortium, presented written testimony and testified in support of SB 2314 indicating his organization is concerned with addressing any issues that affect people with disabilities.

Chairman Holmberg closed the hearing on SB 2314.

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 2314

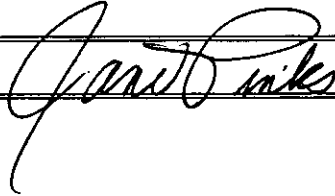
Senate Appropriations Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 02-13-07

Recorder Job Number: 3454

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Chairman Holmberg opened the hearing on SB 2314 relating to motor vehicle registration fees, funding public transportation and it raised the fee three dollars.

Senator Grindberg moved a Do Pass on SB 2314, **Senator Lindaas** seconded.

Discussion followed. A roll call vote was taken resulting in 7 yes, 4 no, 3 absent. The motion passed and Senator Olafson will carry the bill.

Chairman Holmberg closed the hearing on SB 2314.

Date: 2/13
 Roll Call Vote #: 1

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 2314

Senate Appropriations Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken DP

Motion Made By Grindberg Seconded By Lindaas

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Senator Ray Holmberg, Chrm		✓	Senator Aaron Krauter		✓
Senator Bill Bowman, V Chrm		✓	Senator Elroy N. Lindaas	✓	
Senator Tony Grindberg, V Chrm	✓		Senator Tim Mathern	✓	
Senator Randel Christmann		✓	Senator Larry J. Robinson	✓	
Senator Tom Fischer	✓		Senator Tom Seymour		✓
Senator Ralph L. Kilzer		✓	Senator Harvey Tallackson	✓	
Senator Karen K. Krebsbach	✓				
Senator Rich Wardner	✓				

Total (Yes) 8 No 6

Absent _____

Floor Assignment McThay Tros

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
February 13, 2007 2:51 p.m.

Module No: SR-30-3123
Carrier: Nething
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2314: Appropriations Committee (Sen. Holmberg, Chairman) recommends DO PASS
(8 YEAS, 6 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2314 was placed on the
Eleventh order on the calendar.

2007 HOUSE TRANSPORTATION

SB 2134

2007 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. SB 2314

House Transportation Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 03-01-2007

Recorder Job Number: 4212

Committee Clerk Signature

Lisa M Thomas

Minutes:

Vice Chairman Ruby opened the hearing on SB 2314. SB 2314 relates to motor vehicle registration fees and funding of public transportation; and to provide notice of fee increases. Rep. Price and Vigesaa were absent for part of this hearing.

Senator Nething introduced the bill.

Sen. Nething: This bill relates to public transportation funding. It increases the motor vehicle registration fees to six dollars from three dollars. The other part of the bill on page two, line eleven through fifteen where we ask that the fee increase be stated on the registration card itself that the three dollar increase goes for public transportation in the state. The reason I wanted to have that on the bill was to be straight forward with our people who register their motor vehicles and let them know that this money is being used for public transit. The three dollars today is about a half of a bushel of corn. It isn't so much the amount I don't think as it is the concept. We've used the concept before to do it on motor vehicle registration and that's why the bill is produced as such. This is our support for those folks who live in areas who are unable to provide their own transportation, primarily rural folks and those with disabilities and primarily for those who are in their extended youth like I am.

Rep. Thorpe: Is there any other fee increases on the registration this session that you know of?

Sen. Nething: None have come through our transportation committee.

Rep. Thorpe: What are all of the different funding sources?

Sen. Nething: There will be people here who will give you the break down of it.

Ken Tupa, ND Senior Service Providers spoke in support of the bill. See written testimony.

Rep. Weisz: You mentioned that fares can't be used for match. It says you pay a fifty-fifty on operating costs, so what are we doing with the fare money?

Tupa: I believe that the fare dollars collected are applied to the operating expenses.

Rep. Weisz: Are you aware of any other state dollars that goes into transit?

Tupa: I am not aware of any other dollars.

Rep. Thorpe: Under the column Federal 5307, everything is zero until you get down to Bismarck, Fargo and Grand Forks. I am presuming that is federal dollars to cities over fifty thousand, is that right?

Tupa: I do believe that is correct.

Rep. Ruby: Do you know what the average fare is?

Tupa: I don't know the average; we could probably figure that out with the numbers provided here.

Rep. Ruby: Under the other sheet that you handed out for contacts, is the list that is provided in each of these regions, are those the agencies and the uses for the money or is it just for transportation?

Tupa: The dollars that we are requesting in SB 2314 are for transportation use.

Rep. Ruby: On this it show meals on wheels and legal services and senior companion and the funds don't go for that?

Tupa: No, the funds don't go to that. This is just a list of our members and they do provide a number of services.

Rep. Schmidt: I noticed the federal funds available are 3.2 million dollar increase for rural, but did you get an increase for urban?

Tupa: I can't answer that for certain, however, a couple of the providers will certainly do that.

Rep. Price: Just for purposes to make sure we understand that can we walk through a county for example on the first page it is showing that they are getting eighteen thousand eight hundred and eighty dollars and then twenty six ninety-nine in the rural. But if you go the next page, they are showing that cost per mile is \$6.13 and \$8.94 per ride and they are only doing four thousand nine miles in a year.

Tupa: Which provider?

Rep. Price: Eddie County.

Tupa: That appears to be the case.

Rep. Price: And they got twenty-four thousand dollars to do those four thousand miles?

Tupa: That appears to be the case, yes.

Rep. Thorpe: I realize that we aren't talking about huge amounts of money here, but I've had constituents back in my district who have voiced concerns about another increase on registration fees. Now this bill would add an additional three for this to make it six. Have you explored other means of funding?

Tupa: When we looked at our needs and determined how we might come to the legislature with a request for some assistance for those needs, we did discuss general funds and we did look at a couple of other mechanisms that might provide that funding, however we came back to this format because it is already established and there is already three dollars from the motor vehicle registration fees. The DOT budget for example that started in the House and is

now in the Senate, there was some general fund dollars in there in the budget and out of that, our sense was that general fund dollars wouldn't have been maybe as acceptable. This formula is funded. There is a system in place.

Rep. Thorpe: When we were discussing matching funds for federal highway dollars, it was brought out that they suspect down the road that they might get less federal dollars, has your group been advised?

Tupa: I have heard that as well that there could be. Right now we are operating on a continuing appropriation. I have heard discussion that it is possible that there could be less dollars available.

(Rep. Vigesaa is present now)

Rep. Weisz: It is true that probably the federal highway dollars will be decreased but it also fears transit dollars will be increased and that seems to be the answer to the DOT that they are taking, so while we may see a decrease in total dollars because of the fear that will happen on transit. My question would be considering we do have eight million currently for the biennium and for a year we are showing basically the rural plans a total of nine hundred and forty-nine thousand dollars, where is the other 3.1 million?

Tupa: I suspect that it is probably a case of having the dollars to match and access for the federal funds that are available. I think our providers can answer that.

Mike Williams, Fargo City Commission spoke in support of the bill. See written testimony.

Rep. Weisz: One of the things I hear and you made the mention that your rider ship has doubled, but one of the things that comes back to me is the fact that we are going to spend more money and the buses are half empty, so from your prospective, how do you address that?

Williams: It's like driving by Wal-Mart at ten in the morning. It might have ten to one hundred cars there and if you go at five or six o'clock in the afternoon, you might have a half full lot. You have to have the capacity for those riders and you can't be switching buses up and down for the size of the load. At one stop light we have some park and rides. The commuters stop off and one bus that is going one way may have thirty five riders and to drop them off and pick up five and it looks like an empty bus, but generally our buses are thirty-five footers and take thirty to thirty five people and they are designed for that.

Rep. Kelsch: You mentioned Handi-Wheels and I was kind of looking at the Handi-Wheels. It seems as though that's a you know large fare for rides based on the numbers that we have here. What is Handi-Wheels?

Williams: We have quite a few of them. These are people who are generally in full-term care where para-transit, they are not equipped for taking someone in their bed and bringing them to the hospital. They are equipped for a wheel chair, but not full-term care. Handi-Wheels is dedicated more to people with bigger needs.

Rep. Dosch: What are the fares?

Williams: It depends on. Generally they are two dollars. College students have a buy-in deal with NDSU and there is also a monthly pass card for thirty dollars with unlimited ride. We have a lot of new Americans and they work shifts and can't afford cars. We have a ten dollar pass and they wouldn't have been able to get that job without that bus pass. Once they get that job, they are riding the bus on a regular basis.

Brian Aretts, Executive Director of the Fargo Senior Commission spoke in support of the bill.
See written testimony.

Rep. Weisz: I thought that 5307 dollars over the direct federal for urban areas and they aren't part of that eight million dollars that is in the DOT.

Brian: The 5307 is director of an area but that is part of the eight million dollars that is referred to that is being spent in federal funding in the state.

Rep. Weisz: My understanding was that federal dollars that went straight to the urban because the ones passed through the DOT do NOT reflect or show up on the DOT's budget and the DOT's budget does reflect about eight million dollars for public transit, so that was my question. That is why I didn't put the 2.8 million in there because I assumed that was direct because the urban applies for that direct from the federal government.

Brian: I think you raise a good point and maybe we need to do some research to make sure of that.

Rep. Price: If you are taking people into Minnesota for services, are you picking up in Moorehead too? If so, is there any contribution from Minnesota?

Brian: Currently we don't pick up any riders in Minnesota. We are negotiating with the city of Moorehead and Dillworth from the Minnesota side to have a metro wide senior ride service. If we do that, all of the expenses associated with the MN side will be covered by them.

Rep. Price: But you do take them there for services?

Brian: Occasionally there will be a person who will need to go for dialysis from Wahpeton to Fergus Falls.

Carol Anderson, Director of West River Transit spoke in support of the bill. See written testimony.

Robin Were, Director of Bis-Man Transit Board, spoke in support of the bill. See written testimony.

(Rep. Kelsch was absent from hearing at this time.)

(Rep. Ruby and Rep. Gruchalla left as well.)

Rep. Weisz: You received nine hundred and fifty-seven thousand last year of federal funding. Was that all of the federal that was available or had you left some on the table?

Werre: I left thirty thousand dollars on the table which has been applied for right now and we are using because federal funds haven't improved.

Rep. Thorpe: I heard from the man from Fargo, and it sounded like they had bus drivers that were working at seven dollars an hour, is that what you pay as well?

Werre: Yes, it is very difficult to find them.

Leon Dietrich, Transit rider, spoke in support of the bill. See written testimony.

Rep. Ruby and Rep. Gruchalla have returned. Rep. Kelsch absent.

Vickay Gross, program coordinator and advocate for the Protection and Advocacy for

Beneficiaries of Social Security Program, spoke in support of the bill. See written testimony.

Darcy Andahl, on behalf of herself, spoke in support of the bill. See written testimony.

There was no further testimony in support of SB 2314. Chairman Weisz allowed for opposition at this time.

Woodie Barth, ND Farmers Union, spoke in opposition to this bill.

Barth: I want to state for the record that we are NOT against public transportation. We are a very progressive organization and we totally support public transportation. NDFU policy reads we would like tax increases rather than a fee increase or registration increase. We believe a registration fee increase on farmers and ranchers and North Dakotans is an undue burden. We register many vehicles here in ND and it is a fee increase that puts a burden on farmers and ranchers as they operate their farms. We would support this bill in its entirety if the money came from the general fund. Sales tax increase, income tax increase, any other increase rather than registration fee. We do not support this bill as written with the three dollar increase in registration fees because of the burden on the farmers and ranchers.

Rep. Delmore: Do you have members of your own that could benefit from this bill?

Barth: Yes, many rural ND citizens are FU members. Many of those members probably do use public transportation but as I stated, our policy reads that we would prefer tax increases rather than a registration fee increase to support those public transportation systems.

Rep. Delmore: One of the things that is increased is property taxes. Would your organization be happier with an increase in property tax rather than a three dollar fee?

Barth: Our policy doesn't read property taxes in particular. It reads all forms of taxes. We could say property tax increases but all of North Dakotans would have to have a more balanced than we do with registration fee increases. That fee has increases substantially over the last two or three sessions.

Eric Aasmundstad, ND Farm Bureau, spoke in opposition to the bill.

Aasmundstad: I am from Devils Lake area. We are in opposition to this bill; however we are not in opposition to public transportation. We have to make that perfectly clear. I think what Mr. Barth said is a lot of what I have to say. Every session it is three or more dollars in gas tax or registration or something. When we are looking at something over a half a billion dollar budget surplus, I don't think this is the year that we need to raise registration fees three more bucks for anything. Not for public transportation or anything. It would be nice to go through one session, just one, without having to raise registration fees to cover a federal match. Just because it is out there doesn't mean we need to spend it. If we can take it out of the general fund we are not going to complain, but we certainly don't want to see it come out of registration fees. It doesn't only affect agriculture; it affects contractors and anybody that uses a lot of license vehicles. We would just like to see one session where there is no registration increase.

Rep. Thorpe: Out in the rural, we have a lot of farmers that title anywhere from a dozen to one hundred vehicles, so this fee does get high. It is not an equal distribution of the burden.

Aasmundson: Those that license more vehicles are going to carry more of the burden.

Rep. Delmore: Has your organization looked at the difference in what we pay in licensed vehicles compared to other states?

Aasmundson: Yes, we have. We know it's less here, but this isn't Minnesota. That's how we look at it. We have to look at what we do here and not what somebody else has done.

Rep. Delmore: If you would favor another tax increase rather than this, what would your membership be?

Aasmundson: As I stated, I think that when we have a half of a billion dollar budget surplus, we have the funds. We don't have to raise taxes at this time.

There was no further questions from the committee. There was no further testimony on this bill. The hearing was closed. No action was taken at this time.

