

**Fifty-eighth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota  
In Regular Session Commencing Tuesday, January 7, 2003**

HOUSE BILL NO. 1148  
(Natural Resources Committee)  
(At the request of the State Water Commission)

AN ACT to create and enact a new section to chapter 61-16.1 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to release of water resource board easements; and to amend and reenact sections 61-02-14.1, 61-16.1-38, and 61-16.1-53 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to dam construction easements, dam construction permits, and dike and dam removal notices and hearings.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

**SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 61-02-14.1 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**61-02-14.1. Release or assignment of easements - Procedure.** The commission may, when it deems such action to be in the best interest of the state, for good and valuable consideration, release easements granted to the state for the construction, operation, and maintenance of dams, along with access thereto, if such dams have not been constructed within ten years of the granting of the easement or if such dams are no longer useful ~~and will not be reconstructed.~~ The commission may also assign such easements to a political subdivision if it determines the assignment would be in the best interests of the state. Any release ~~executed under the authority of this section~~ or assignment shall be in the name of the state of North Dakota by the governor and attested by the secretary of state.

**SECTION 2.** A new section to chapter 61-16.1 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

**Release of easements - Procedure.** When it deems such action to be in the best interests of the district or other political subdivision, a water resource board or governing body of another political subdivision may release easements assigned to it from the state for the construction, operation, and maintenance of dams, along with access to the dams, if the dams are no longer useful.

**SECTION 3. AMENDMENT.** Section 61-16.1-38 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**61-16.1-38. Permit to construct or modify dam, dike, or other device required - Penalty - Emergency.** No dikes, dams, or other devices for water conservation, flood control regulation, watershed improvement, or storage of water which are capable of retaining, obstructing, or diverting more than ~~twelve and one-half fifty acre-feet [15448.52 61674.08 cubic meters]~~ or twenty-five acre-feet [30837.04 cubic meters] of water for a medium-hazard or high-hazard dam, may be constructed within any district except in accordance with the provisions of this chapter. An application for the construction of any dike, dam, or other device, along with complete plans and specifications, must be presented first to the state engineer. Except for low-hazard dams less than ten feet [3.05 meters] in height, the plans and specifications must be completed by a professional engineer registered in this state. After receipt, the state engineer shall consider the application in such detail as the state engineer deems necessary and proper. The state engineer shall refuse to allow the construction of any unsafe or improper dike, dam, or other device which would interfere with the orderly control of the water resources of the district, or may order such changes, conditions, or modifications as in the judgment of the state engineer may be necessary for safety or the protection of property. Within forty-five days after receipt of the application, except in unique or complex situations, the state engineer shall complete the state engineer's initial review of the application and forward the application, along with any changes, conditions, or modifications, to the water resource board of the district within which the contemplated

project is located. The board thereupon shall consider, within forty-five days, the application, and suggest any changes, conditions, or modifications to the state engineer. If the application meets with the board's approval, the board shall forward the approved application to the state engineer. The state engineer shall make the final decision on the application and forward that decision to the applicant and the local water resource board. The state engineer may issue temporary permits for dikes, dams, or other devices in cases of an emergency. Any person constructing a dam, dike, or other device, which is capable of retaining, obstructing, or diverting more than ~~twelve and one-half~~ fifty acre-feet [~~15418.52~~ 61674.08 cubic meters] of water or twenty-five acre-feet [30837.04 cubic meters] of water for a medium-hazard or high-hazard dam, without first securing a permit to do so, as required by this section, is liable for all damages proximately caused by the dam, dike, or other device, and is guilty of a class B misdemeanor.

**SECTION 4. AMENDMENT.** Section 61-16.1-53 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**61-16.1-53. Removal of a noncomplying dike or dam - Notice and hearing - Appeal - Injunction.** Upon receipt of a complaint of unauthorized construction of a dike, dam, or other device for water conservation, flood control, regulation, watershed improvement, or storage of water, the water resource board shall promptly investigate and make a determination thereon. If the board determines that a dam or other device, capable of retaining, obstructing, or diverting more than ~~twelve and one-half~~ fifty acre-feet [~~15418.52~~ 61674.08 cubic meters] of water or twenty-five acre-feet [30837.04 cubic meters] of water for a medium-hazard or high-hazard dam, has been established or constructed by a landowner or tenant contrary to this title or any rules adopted by the board, the board shall notify the landowner by registered mail at the landowner's post-office address of record. A copy of the notice must also be sent to the tenant, if any. The notice must specify the nature and extent of the noncompliance and must state that if the dike, dam, or other device is not removed within the period the board determines, but not less than fifteen days, the board shall cause the removal of the dike, dam, or other device and assess the cost of the removal, or the portion the board determines, against the property of the landowner responsible. The notice must also state that the affected landowner, within fifteen days of the date the notice is mailed, may demand, in writing, a hearing upon the matter. Upon receipt of the demand, the board shall set a hearing date within fifteen days from the date the demand is received. In the event of an emergency, the board may immediately apply to the appropriate district court for an injunction prohibiting the landowner or tenant from constructing or maintaining the dike, dam, or other device, or ordering the landowner to remove the dike, dam, or other device. Assessments levied under this section must be collected in the same manner as other assessments authorized by this chapter. If, in the opinion of the board, more than one landowner or tenant has been responsible, the costs may be assessed on a pro rata basis in proportion to the responsibility of the landowners. A person aggrieved by action of the board under this section may appeal the decision of the board to the district court of the county in which the land is located in accordance with the procedure provided in section 28-34-01. A hearing as provided for in this section is not prerequisite to an appeal.

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Speaker of the House

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of the Senate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Clerk of the House

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Senate

This certifies that the within bill originated in the House of Representatives of the Fifty-eighth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota and is known on the records of that body as House Bill No. 1148.

House Vote:      Yeas    94      Nays    0      Absent    0

Senate Vote:    Yeas    47      Nays    0      Absent    0

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Chief Clerk of the House

Received by the Governor at \_\_\_\_\_ M. on \_\_\_\_\_, 2003.

Approved at \_\_\_\_\_ M. on \_\_\_\_\_, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor

Filed in this office this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2003,  
at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_\_ M.

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Secretary of State