

**RECENT ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES BEFORE THE EMPOWER NORTH DAKOTA COMMISSION****NOVEMBER 29, 2011, 1:05 P.M.****ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSMISSION COMMITTEE****ROUGH RIDER ROOM, STATE CAPITOL****SENATOR RICH WARDNER, CHAIRMAN****ALAN ANDERSON – COMMISSIONER, ND DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Al Anderson, Commissioner of the North Dakota Department of Commerce. As Commissioner of Commerce, I also have the pleasure of serving as the chairman of the EmPower North Dakota Commission.

The EmPower ND Commission is focusing its efforts this interim on four key areas. These include infrastructure, workforce, research & development, and federal regulation. Subcommittees have been formed to delve into these issues and are reporting to the commission at each monthly meeting. The format of the report you will receive next summer will be revised to reflect the focus on these four key areas and will include recommendations in each category. We will also have pages devoted to each of the energy industries providing an overview each industry as well as the current status.

The Great Plains and EmPower ND Energy Expo was held earlier this month. Thank you to those of you who attended. I understand that it may have been difficult for some of you to attend due to the special session the week before. The purpose of the energy expo was to discuss the most pressing energy issues facing the state and nation. The expo included remarks from the governor and North Dakota's federal delegation. It included panels on national energy policy, workforce development, hydraulic fracturing, and project financing. It was well attended with approximately 250 people in attendance ranging from industry leaders and policy makers to environmentalists.

One panelist that was of interest to many was Melissa Blake who is the mayor of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Alberta. Wood Buffalo is in the heart of Canada's oil sands development and has had to respond to challenges associated with tremendous growth in the oil industry and associated population growth. The population of Wood Buffalo has doubled over the past decade and expects to reach 230,000 people by 2030. Melissa offered an interesting perspective and has agreed to serve as a resource in the future.

In January, a group of state officials will be holding thirteen town hall meetings within the oil & gas producing counties. This is a follow up to the meetings held a little over a year ago in preparations for the legislative session. We will be providing updates on the efforts being made to address infrastructure and other challenges, as well as to gather information and input on what more should be done. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your efforts during the special session to address the challenges created by oil & gas development. The additional troopers and oil & gas impacts funds are welcomed help.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Energy Development and Transmission Committee, thank you for allowing me the time to visit with you today. That concludes my testimony and I am happy to entertain any questions.