

2021 House Bill No. 1395
Testimony before the Senate Appropriations Committee
Presented by Tim Wahlin
Workforce Safety and Insurance
March 26, 2021

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Tim Wahlin, Chief of Injury Services at WSI. I am here today to provide testimony regarding House Bill No. 1395.

Governor Burgum issued emergency orders which altered the compensability of Covid-19 within North Dakota workers' compensation. The orders expanded coverage to include frontline health care workers, frontline first responders, certain funeral personnel and care providers in certain congregate living facilities for the developmentally disabled.

As a result, claims otherwise not compensable, became compensable. The order was rescinded February 22, 2021. Injuries arising within the covered period continue to generate costs.

WSI is a special fund agency entirely funded by North Dakota employer premiums. All claim costs are paid by our North Dakota employers.

To date WSI has paid \$2,047,645 in Covid-19 related claims costs. For costs incurred before December 31, 2020 the agency received \$1,018,052 reflected on page 2, line 29 of the bill. Additional expenses through March 23, 2021 are \$1,032,777.

The Governor's emergency order has been rescinded and while payments continue, they appear to be dropping significantly. Payments on these claims will continue but those costs are uncertain, and as a result WSI would simply ask for funding to the extent it has incurred payments as of now.

WSI requests that an adjustment amount of \$1,032,777 be included. This amount will offset those Covid-19 costs which will otherwise be borne by our North Dakota employers.

That concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.