

## Testimony of Lake Agassiz Water Authority

### **Senate Bill 2020**

### **House Appropriations Committee – Education and Environment Division**

**Bismarck, North Dakota – March 9, 2023**

Chairman Nathe and members of the House Appropriations Committee – Education and Environment Division. My name is Tim Mahoney and I am Chair of the Lake Agassiz Water Authority (LAWA) Board and Mayor of Fargo. LAWA was created by the North Dakota legislature in 2003 to represent the local users, the cities and rural water systems, of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. LAWA and the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion) are cosponsors of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project.

I am here to testify in support of funding in the Department of Water Resources budget, SB 2020, for the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. I'm also here in support of ensuring local affordability of the project by providing access to flexible, long-term financing.

I appreciate the efforts by the Senate to include \$953 million commitment by the State of North Dakota to fund the Red River Valley Water Supply Project to completion. This State commitment helps provide certainty for our end user and gives us confidence the Red River Valley Water Supply will come to fruition. Cities and rural water systems are asked to invest in the Project through the local share requirement, therefore a financial commitment from the State to see the project through completion is a meaningful sign of support.

I am here today to ask the House Education and Environment Committee to consider LAWA and Garrison Diversion's request for \$255 million dollars to construct 43 miles of pipeline and to design an additional 72 miles so the project can remain on a cost-effective timeline. The \$255 million request, along with \$85 million of local funding, will allow us to move the Project forward in a timely manner.

Now is the time for the State to harness the natural resources provided by the Missouri River. Time is of the essence, as a cost-efficient construction schedule reduces the risk of ongoing inflation and reduces the political risks associated with competition from other States wishing to access the Missouri River downstream.

Now is the time to invest in the Red River Valley Water Supply Project as it will benefit future generations and safeguard the water supply of nearly HALF of North Dakota's population. Thank you, Chairman Nathe and members of the Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony.