



Testimony on SB 2020
Presented to the House Appropriations Committee
Prepared by Bernie Dardis, West Fargo Commission President
March 9, 2023

1 Chairman Nathe, Vice-Chairman Swiontek, and members of the House
2 Appropriations Committee Education and Environment Division: My name is Bernie
3 Dardis and I am the Commission President for the City of West Fargo. I am here to testify
4 in support of the funding included in Senate Bill 2020, the Department of Water
5 Resources budget, to move the Red River Valley Water Supply Project forward this
6 biennium and to ensure the completion of the project in a timely manner.

7 As of 2023, West Fargo has a population of more than 40,000 residents and is
8 known as "A City on the Grow," as it is one of the fastest growing cities in the state. West
9 Fargo is part of a regional water system operated by the City of Fargo and includes
10 multiple cities and rural systems in Cass County. Both Cities and greater Cass County will
11 benefit from the supplemental and industrial water supply from the Red River Valley
12 Water Supply Project.

13 In addition to safeguarding water for domestic use, access to industrial water
14 from the Red River Valley Water Supply Project is needed as West Fargo endeavors to
15 attract and diversify its economic opportunities. Continued economic development is
16 an important aspect of West Fargo's strategic efforts to relieve some of the property tax
17 pressure off our residents.

18 The residents and businesses in West Fargo will contribute a fair share of the local
19 cost-share that will be available upon approval of funding for the project. We are
20 grateful for the current inclusion of \$175 million for the RRVWSP in the Department of
21 Water Resources budget, as well as the state commitment to the Project in the form of

22 \$953 million. Please continue to support this drought mitigation Project that will benefit
23 West Fargo and approximately 50% of North Dakota's population.

24 Thank you, Chairman Nathe and members of the House Appropriations
25 Committee Education and Environment Division for the opportunity to provide
26 testimony.