

Testimony



Senate Bill 2020

House Appropriations - Education and Environment Division

March 9, 2023

Chairman Nathe, Vice Chairman Swiontek and members of the House Appropriations Committee – Education and Environment Division. The Valley Prosperity Partnership (VPP) is a membership organization led by business executives – joined by leaders from higher education, economic development, and chambers of commerce – to advance and advocate for shared strategic economic development opportunities that will strengthen and diversify the Red River Valley region and the entirety of North Dakota.

The Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) is a top priority for the VPP because it is of critical importance to the economic well-being of the region's businesses and residents. Without the certainty of an adequate water supply, companies may restrain their growth, expand elsewhere or choose to relocate. Companies from outside the region looking for a new location may take cities and counties in the Valley off their short list of potential sites. The economic impact would be especially disastrous in the event of an extended drought, with losses in that scenario now estimated to reach as high as \$25 billion. Simply put, the strength of our economy relies on a steady and reliable supply of water.

The VPP greatly appreciates previous State investments in the RRVWSP. Timely additional investments are needed, as an expedited construction schedule reduces the risk of ongoing cost increases, and the uncertainty of water shortages looms large on the horizon. Therefore, the VPP respectfully requests that your committee consider “accelerated funding” for the RRVWSP.

Valley Prosperity Partnership Steering Committee

Brian Johnson, CEO, Choice Bank,
Co-Chair Valley Prosperity Partnership*

Judd Graham, Market President
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Dan Conrad, President & CEO
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David Cook, President
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