

OFFICE OF TAX EQUALIZATION

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January 7, 2023



2023 House Finance and Taxation Committee

Honorable Representative Craig Headland, Chairman

North Dakota State Capitol

Dear Representative Headland and Members of the House Finance and Taxation Committee:

My name is Don Flaherty and I am the Director of Tax Equalization for Dickey County. I am writing you today to speak in opposition of HB 1126. I believe that the proposed changes to NDCC § 57-02-53 of the content of the notice of increase for property assessments will cause greater confusion and misunderstanding to taxpayers as to their fiscal responsibilities as well as promote wasteful use of government resources to meet the proposed requirements. Providing an estimate of taxes as a part of the assessment increase notice based on the previous year's mill rate will lead to an increase of frustration because taxpayer will be getting conflicting information from multiple parties as to what their property tax liability will be in November. I agree that providing information to the taxpayer is essential, but if the information provided is misleading, it will result in greater frustration that will ultimately lead to apathy by the taxpayer as to the property tax process.

I believe this change in being proposed due to the belief that once a taxpayer receives their property tax estimate with the list of budget hearings in August, they no longer have an opportunity to seek a change of value on their property for that year. This is simply not true. A property owner has two opportunities to seek a change of value for the property tax year, once during the equalization process and once during the abatement process, which can be up to two years after the value has been set. Inserting a hypothetical tax bill in the notice of assessment increase will not enhance this process in a way that is of benefit to the taxpayer.

Approximately 13 years ago, the legislature removed the \$3,000 increase component from the notice of assessment increase trigger. This was a mistake that the legislature corrected in their next session. By removing the 10% requirement in this bill, the legislature will be making a similar mistake. The \$3,000/10% trigger works extremely well, there is no benefit to altering it and the doing so will only increase wasteful spending at a time when fiscal responsibility is paramount.

Therefore, I would encourage you to vote against of HB 1126 as these proposed adjustments are not in the best interest of property tax payers in North Dakota.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Donald W. Flaherty".

Donald W. Flaherty

Dickey County Director of Tax Equalization