

March 1, 2023

Chairman Patten and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Michael Wyum. As Vice Chairman of the Sargent County Water Resource Board, I urge a NO vote on HB 1462.

If one assumes that HB 1391 becomes law, its language states: "The minutes of the meeting must be provided to the official newspaper of the county for publication OR posted to the water resource board's website within ten days". This seems to be a reasonable time frame and an affordable method of notification for actions of a Water Resource District.

As proposed in HB 1462, notification would require publication three times in the newspaper of record or service by a process server to all affected parties. Neither of these methods is affordable in money or time required. In our rural communities, the legal newspaper is generally a weekly publication which would require three additional weeks for proper notification.

Many decisions which Water Resource Districts make are quite time sensitive from a public safety standpoint. Remedying washed out culverts, collapsed drainage ditches due to sloughing, or flooded roadways should not be delayed for the above mentioned notification process.

As a side note, I read with dismay the testimony from three Sargent County landowners who have been opposed to a project on Drain # 11 in Sargent County. Sargent County Water Resource District has been legally challenged several times by this group. They have yet to be successful. They have, however, delayed the project several years and cost our local constituents millions of dollars in added project costs, plus the loss of productivity caused by a less than well functioning legal drain. In reading their testimony, I feel that much of what is said is "sour grapes" and that you're not hearing "the rest of the story" which paints a much different picture from what you've read.

I believe that it is poor policy to base legislative change on the basis of a few individuals who do not have the best interests of the general public at the forefront. Therefore, I strongly encourage you to vote NO on HB 1462.

Sincerely, Michael Wyum
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