

**Senate Bill 2251**  
**Testimony of Ron Ness**  
**Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee**  
**January 26, 2023**

Chairman Patten and members of the Committee, my name is Ron Ness, president of the North Dakota Petroleum Council (“NDPC”). The North Dakota Petroleum Council represents more than 600 companies involved in all aspects of the oil and gas industry, including oil and gas production, refining, pipeline, transportation, mineral leasing, consulting, legal work, and oilfield service activities in North Dakota. I appear before you today in support of SB 2251.

Over the past fifteen years, our members have built about 20,000 miles worth of gathering and transmission pipelines in the Bakken and across North Dakota to transport oil, natural gas, and produced water. If there is one critical aspect we have learned, and sometimes learned the hard way, you must treat your owners along the right-away with the “Golden Rule.” That is to treat them as you would want to be treated in regard to their property rights. The best practice is to use land agents and other folks who are from North Dakota. They typically understand the importance of respecting property rights and working with the landowner to adjust the pipeline location to meet their needs. Senate Bill 2251 makes sense. It essentially codifies the common practice that most pipeline companies are utilizing. Senate Bill 2251 does not prohibit a handshake and signed personal agreement to get the survey done, but what it does do is ensure that when you come home from town, there are not a bunch of trucks on your property. That situation typically results in frustration and a poor start to a relationship that will be in place for decades. For these reasons, NDPC supports SB 2251, and we urge a Do Pass recommendation.

I would be happy to answer any questions.