

Testimony in Opposition to SB 2174

My name is Jeff Kenner. I live on a farm on the shores of Devils Lake. I oppose SB 2174, and I will tell you why after some background information.

I'm Jeff Kenner that wishes I would have been a township officer back in 1999. The townships and counties were tricked in to giving up most of their rights and went along with Senate bills 2355 and 2365. They believed that these bills would be set in stone in the Century Code. They were even told that "the local governments have discretion to alter the model to address local concerns and to meet local needs". More lies.

The legislature has been taking more and more township rights away by passing several bills throughout the years and with Farm Bureau's help writing the bills. Extremely unethical. Good old boys network.

I'm also the Jeff Kenner that is a Farm Bureau member. I believe that they do a lot of good things, but not when it comes to animal feeding operations. Why try to bully your way and get as close to a town, residence, lake, or business. There are miles and miles of open land to put animal feeding operations on.

I'm the Jeff Kenner that believes wholeheartedly, do unto others as you would have them do unto you. I care deeply for people.

A friend of mine asked the owner of a hog-feeding operation, "How did you get your operation?" He said that you just keep suing them! That is what Farm Bureau tried to do multiple times against Pelican Township and the one I live in, Grand Harbor Township. By the grace of God, help from over 1500 Lake Region Concerned Citizens, and the Spirit Lake Tribe south of Devils Lake, we prevailed on stopping a proposed hog operation that would have been closer than one-quarter mile to the shores of Devils Lake, which is a closed-basin lake.

The Spirit Lake Tribe said they would never allow a hog-feeding operation near the sacred waters of Devils Lake. Why does this have to be a fight? Where is the common sense? Simply stay far enough away from people, watersheds, lakes, and rivers. Don't spit on your neighbor. Treat them with dignity and respect.

I also want you to know that I am the same Jeff Kenner that is not against animal feeding operations. There is lots of room in our state for them. Don't put profit over people! Just be honest and ethical! I have had several legislators, and the Ag Commissioner lie to me in person. Makes me sad. I get a feeling of losing all hope in those we have elected to represent 'us', the people that would be directly affected by this.

One more thing about where I, Jeff Kenner live. I live right on Devils Lake that is being polluted by Lake Alice, to the north. According to a study that was done by the federal government that manages Lake Alice, it says that upstream animal feeding operations are polluting it. Nothing is being done about it. Deaf ears at the North Dakota Health Department, Division of Water Quality.

I strongly urge a DO NOT PASS on SB 2174 because it is just more trickery from Farm Bureau, and we will lose more than what was taken from our townships last session in HB 1423.

We would like our 50 percent setback tool put back in the Century Code, please.

I know you get a lot of bills sent your way, and some of you, admittedly, have not read ones you have signed off on. You are told that it is a good bill. SB 2174 is trickery on page 3.

An odor footprint tool developed by the Ag Commissioner? One hundred years of the weather being tracked and reported. They can't even get that right most of the time.

Don't be fooled by the county and township representatives, because they did not even consult with counties or townships regarding this bill. Also, don't be fooled by the Ag Commissioners' taskforce, which is mainly represented by groups that have the most to gain from animal-feeding operations. It's the classic fox guarding the hen house scenario.

Don't forget the human aspect of it. These are real lives and the environment that would be negatively impacted. True family farms. Family-owned businesses. Children and grandchildren that would be subject to the pollution from these operations. All because some people are desperate to get more animal-feeding operations into North Dakota.

These operations don't need to be almost on top of subdivisions, cities, residences, people and right next to bodies of water!

I have mentioned my name several times and you'll probably remember it. But I would rather have you remember God in all your decision-making. Stay honest. Stay ethical. Use your moral compass that He gives you. Don't hurt your neighbor or give somebody else power to hurt their neighbor by passing horrible bills that become law. How about just love your neighbor. God bless you, and thank you for your time.

Jeff Kenner , Chairman of Grand Harbor Township in Ramsey County

For any questions, please call me at (701) 740-5673 or email me at jeffkenner701@gmail.com.