

Chairman Porter and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Madelyn Orr and I am the fourth generation of Orr Farms from Ypsilanti, ND. Currently I am studying Political Science and Economics, with hopes of one day going into public service. It has always been my goal to serve my community and amplify those voices who others will not hear. I am disappointed to see that this is not the highest priority for some of the elected officials in my home state.

The only testimonies in favor of HB1258 were given by lobbyists and large energy companies. All those in opposition are landowners, farmers, and community members. North Dakotans oppose HB1258. This bill is dangerous as it undermines local control where zoning and land-use ordinances are traditionally made. These laws must continue to be made by those who will be directly impacted and have a personal interest in the outcomes, locally.

The most frequent arguments I have found to build a power line through my home are “resiliency”, “economic growth”, and “reliability”. If resiliency truly is the motivating factor, and *not* profits, then the literature tells us that burying lines is the safest way to ensure the longevity of power lines and our communities. But this is not about burying infrastructure for us, it is about keeping local control local. I am not opposed to electrification, infrastructure, or energy projects. I am not opposed to making North Dakota a business-friendly state. I am opposed to silencing rural communities because they may be perceived as being on the peripheral to some in power. It only takes two out of three members on the PSC committee to approve a life-changing bill. The sunsets, the fields, the sounds, and everything that makes home “home”, will never be the same. Two “yes’s” that somehow outweighs all our “no’s”. Our communities have been marginalized, but we will not be shut out. Local control and private property rights are essential to healthy communities, healthy democracy, and a healthy North Dakota.

Some have called our opposition to these 155-foot, 345 kV towers “parochial” because our property rights and community health matters to us. We are the “limited number of landowners” that packed a room so full in Stutsman County in opposition to these ordinances that residents were forced to stand in the back of the room at a local meeting. We are the “limited number of landowners” that were so eager to speak our minds, that there was a time limit put on us to speak at this meeting. We are the “limited number of landowners” that are apparently so small that we were able to rapidly mobilize our communities to gather testimonies and write op-eds in opposition to this infrastructure project.

We know what is best for us. We have said no, now it is your turn. I urge you to vote **Do Not Pass** on **HB 1258**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Madelyn Orr