

Members of the Committee:

My name is Richard Long, and I am a farmer/rancher residing in LaMoure County. I am submitting this testimony **in strong opposition to HB 1258**—yet another one of the many bills introduced this year that threatens the fundamental property rights of North Dakotans—particularly those of us who live and work on the land every day.

Rural North Dakotans have fought for generations to protect our rights to manage our own land. HB 1258 threatens to disrupt that balance, giving corporate developers a direct path to override our locally elected township boards and county commissions. If passed, this bill sets a dangerous precedent—where decisions impacting our land, safety, and economic well-being are made by distant authorities under pressure from powerful utilities.

The retroactive clause added by Mike Brandenburg—applying this law back to January 1, 2025—happened as a result of and after Wano & Willowbank townships’ denial for a CUP. Furthermore, HB1258 received no opposition because it was ramrodded through the House after the 2 township meetings and none of us knew about it.

To suggest that local governments are somehow incapable of understanding “the far-reaching benefits” of infrastructure projects is not only patronizing—it’s flat-out wrong. Our communities will *live* with the consequences of high-voltage transmission lines cutting through prime farmland, our pastures, and will be erected dangerously close to homes (with a negligible 500-foot setback from an inhabited residence). We have every right—and every capability—to weigh in. This bill is about making it easier for corporations to bulldoze local opposition. It’s about smoothing the path for corporate profits under the guise of “grid reliability” and “economic growth.”

North Dakota’s heritage is built on private property rights and local control. We should be expanding local involvement, not eliminating it. I urge this committee to listen to the farmers, ranchers, families, and local leaders who know their land, know their communities, and deserve a seat at the table.

I urge you to **vote NO** on this bill and to stand with those who live and work on this land every day.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Richard Long, Berlin ND