

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 3015

Introduced by

Representatives Drovdal, Kempenich, Warner

Senator Bowman

1 A concurrent resolution urging Congress to provide funds to replace the Four Bears Bridge.

2 **WHEREAS**, in 1944 Congress enacted the Flood Control Act of 1944 [the Pick-Sloan
3 Act], which authorized the construction of various dams on the Missouri River, including the
4 Garrison Dam project, for the benefit of citizens of many states for the provision of inexpensive
5 electricity, flood control, water supply, and recreational opportunities; and

6 **WHEREAS**, as a result of the Garrison Dam, Lake Sakakawea was created on the
7 Missouri River which caused areas of North Dakota and the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation
8 which were previously closely connected by land to be separated by long expanses of water;
9 and

10 **WHEREAS**, a vital link in North Dakota's system of highways are bridges crossing the
11 Missouri River, including the Four Bears Bridge constructed in 1952 by the United States Army
12 Corps of Engineers, located near the city of New Town on State Highway 23 connecting United
13 States Highways 83 and 85 and traveling through the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation; and

14 **WHEREAS**, the Four Bears Bridge is the only bridge across the Missouri River for 190
15 miles of the river with the next two closest crossings being a bridge 90 highway miles to the
16 north and Garrison Dam 100 highway miles to the south; and

17 **WHEREAS**, the Four Bears Bridge provides a vital link for the entire state as well as
18 many rural communities in northwest North Dakota, including access links to businesses, farms,
19 schools, and other educational facilities, health facilities, government offices, and ambulance,
20 police, and fire protection services which are integral to the health, safety, and well-being of the
21 citizens living in this area; and

22 **WHEREAS**, at the time of the completion of the Four Bears Bridge by the Corps of
23 Engineers, it was obsolete based on the bridge construction standards of that time, and
24 presently is even more hazardous because of the narrow width of its driving surface; and

1 **WHEREAS**, the North Dakota Department of Transportation is required to maintain and
2 repair the Four Bears Bridge and will be required to spend at least \$8,000,000 in major
3 renovation and repairs to keep it in a safe and usable condition for the foreseeable future if the
4 bridge is not replaced; and

5 **WHEREAS**, the North Dakota Department of Transportation has determined that
6 instead of costly repair and maintenance of an already obsolete bridge, the bridge should be
7 replaced at an estimated cost of \$42,000,000; and

8 **WHEREAS**, the State of North Dakota has examined the many funding options but
9 simply does not have adequate funds to either provide major maintenance for the bridge or to
10 construct a new bridge without jeopardizing the maintenance needs and safety of other bridges
11 in North Dakota;

12 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**
13 **OF NORTH DAKOTA, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN:**

14 That the Fifty-fifth Legislative Assembly urges the Congress of the United States to take
15 whatever actions and make available appropriate funds as are necessary to replace the Four
16 Bears Bridge in recognition of the continued federal responsibility for the Garrison Dam project;
17 and

18 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Fifty-fifth Legislative Assembly also requests the
19 assistance and advocacy of all federal agencies responsible for or having an interest in the
20 construction, maintenance, and replacement of the Four Bears Bridge to take all action
21 necessary to solve the urgent problem of the replacement of the Four Bears Bridge.