

**HOUSE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIR COMMITTEE
REPRESENTATIVE JIM KASPER, CHAIR
JANUARY 8, 2021**

**NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION
RICK GARDNER, DIRECTOR, ROUGH RIDER INDUSTRIES
PRESENTING TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
3002**

Good morning, Chairman Kasper and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee. My name is Rick Gardner and I am the Director of Rough Rider Industries (RRI). I am here on behalf of the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCOR) to provide testimony in support of House Concurrent Resolution 3002.

The Missouri River Correction Center (MRCC) is a minimum-security prison that lies on approximately 800 acres of land and has housed up to 191 individuals. The MRCC is an open campus correctional center with no fences or barriers surrounding it. Male adults may reside at MRCC when they have 42 months or less on their sentence, classified as minimum custody, and approved by the Warden of Transitional Facilities. A variety of programs are provided to the individuals to include drug and alcohol treatment, education, work release, and on-site employment to include Roughrider Industries (RRI). RRI provides several work programs on the MRCC property including a welding shop, land and herd management, fencing crew, and sandbag filling operation.

Within this property are 304 acres of cropland of which 260 acres are irrigated and 44 acres dry. RRI has invested over \$300,000 into a pivot style irrigation system and well

site. The cropland is currently leased at a rate \$290 per acre and generates \$88,160 in annual revenue to the department. The entire cropland area is located on the southwest side of 48th Avenue Southwest and lies within the natural flood plain.

Southwest of the cropland area lies an additional 213 acres of land which was the proposed site for the North Dakota Park and Recreation Department Day Park. During 2011, this area experienced heavy flooding and ten feet of sand was deposited over the entire area. Prior to the 2011, this area was used as hay ground and did experience seasonal flooding. Today, the tree-lined areas along the riverbank are part of a lease with North Dakota State University Hettinger Research Extension Center on a grazing research project. Approximately 400-500 sheep are pastured on 279 acres of land surrounding the MRCC campus area. This lease generates \$4,058 in annual revenue to the DOCR and helps control weed populations in the area such as leafy spurge. In addition, through an agreement with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, this area is also part of an experimental archery hunting season for deer, turkey, and waterfowl. Twenty-five lottery-hunting permits are made available to the public each year; however, the program was suspended in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Along the riverbank on the Northeast corner and just outside of the boundary of the proposed Day Park site is RRI's sandbag filling operation. The bags are filled with sand that has been deposited by the flood and wind. These sandbags are used on roadway construction projects and during the 2020 construction season, 56,000 sandbags were produced and dispersed throughout the state.



Mr. Chairman, the DOCR and RRI fully support House Concurrent Resolution 3002. Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to answer any questions at this time. Thank you.