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January 22, 2021

Testimony of:
Geoff Simon, Lobbyist #144
in support of HB 1179
House Political Subdivisions Committee

Chairman Dockter and members of the committee:

This testimony is presented on behalf of the Western Dakota Energy Association and the 17 oil-producing counties which are WDEA members. While everyone appreciates the need for transparency and accountability in government spending, we also recognize the importance of efficiency and avoidance of unnecessary bureaucratic mandates.

HB 1179 proposes the repeal of a section of law intended to ensure accountability of counties which are allocated revenue through the gross production tax distribution formula, but the practical application of this section of Century Code has demonstrated that it is an unnecessary reporting burden imposed on auditors in counties that receive GPT revenue.

While most counties have dutifully complied with the reporting requirement, we believe the record will indicate there has been little if any public interest in the financial documentation that has been provided. Rest assured, if and when a request for the information now required in these reports is requested, it will be promptly provided to the legislature or any member of the public who requests it.

However, in the absence of such public demand, we would encourage the committee to support repeal of this burdensome reporting requirement.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Geoff Simon
Executive Director