Testimony to the **House Political Subdivisions** February 4, 2021

Thank you Chairman Dockter and Committee Members, for the opportunity to provide feedback on HB 1183. My name is Aaron Birst and I represent the North Dakota Association of Counties which is generally supportive of any efforts to improve the current system of onsite waste-water regulations.

Over the last few years, I have been made aware of some frustration from both regulators, installers and general citizen with North Dakota's patchwork of septic system regualtion. Currently, septic systems are regulated by local public health entities. However, each public health entity has its own licensing system and some differing views on what type of septic systems are appropriate. That has caused some confusion. However, there IS large agreement amongst the parties the system can be improved. Everyone agrees to these facts:

1) **Improper** disposal of human waste poses significant health concerns for everyone
2) There is a lack of uniformity throughout the State on how public health district regulate these systems
3) There is scientific information available to ensure these systems can be built safely

HB 1183 is an attempt to bring some uniformity to the regulations by creating a State-wide entity that not only could adopt some uniform standards for the local public health to follow but also provide a venue where disputes could be resolved as to avoid costly litigation. This board would then be made up of a cross section of regulators and installers. The board would simply create the rules and the local public health entities would still act as the boots on the ground to enforce such rules.

I am aware there are still some concerns with the bill in terms of the make-up of the board and of course the fiscal note. However, I believe these are things that all the stakeholders can ultimately find some compromise on. HB 1183 might not be the perfect solution, but it is a step in the right direction to ensure North Dakota is protected for years to come.
Thank you!