

Testimony for House Bill 1437

March 11, 2021

Dan Jacobson,

ND Water Resource Districts Association, Chairman
SE Cass County WRD, Chairman
Cass County Joint Board, Chairman
Red River Joint Water Board, Director

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Agriculture Committee:

My name is Dan Jacobson, and I serve as Chairman for the ND Water Resource Districts Association; I serve as Chairman for the SE Cass County Water Resource District; I serve as Chairman of the Cass County Joint Board; and I serve on the Board of Directors for the Red River Joint Board.

The North Dakota Water Users, North Dakota Water Resource Districts Association and North Dakota Irrigation Association's 2021 Goals and Resolutions document includes the following resolution:

DRAINAGE REGULATION. We support water resource districts' authority to manage and regulate tile, subsurface, and surface drainage to ensure responsible watershed management and to protect downstream communities, landowners, and infrastructure. We support managed drainage as critical for the agricultural economy in North Dakota; for protection of public infrastructure; and for the benefit of all landowners and residents of North Dakota.

The North Dakota Water Resource Districts Association Legislative Committee has reviewed HB 1437 and believes that it is consistent with the Association's resolution on this topic. The Legislative Committee believes that it will help streamline the subsurface drainage process for both water boards and ag producers, while also protecting downstream interests.

The members in our Association recognize the importance of subsurface water management in maximizing ag production. In addition, our members recognize that ag producers and subsurface water management contractors have established a history of responsible water management. We appreciate the cooperative effort among agriculture and water interests in crafting HB 1437 in a way that works for all of us.

Regarding the notice requirement for projects under 80 acres, this will be helpful in assisting both water boards and the State Water Commission gain the information that will be helpful to manage water and design water conveyance projects and features.

We also appreciate the amendment added by the House regarding the State Water Commission's ability to provide cost-share on certain projects. This language clarifies that the Commission can provide cost-share support for deepening and widening of existing drains, important improvement activities that historically have been cost-shared.

I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have regarding this testimony.

Thank you.

Dan Jacobson