

**Testimony by Robert Kudrna**  
On behalf of the  
**Southwest Pipeline Project**  
to the  
**Senate Appropriations Committee**  
**Hearing on House Bill 1020**  
**Monday, March 22, 2021**

My name is Robert Kudrna, and I am a longtime resident of Dunn County. I remember the times before receiving quality water as a result of the Southwest Pipeline Project (SWPP). They were tough!

Out in Dunn County, where my family has ranched for decades, we have a lot of shallow wells and not the best of water quality. The groundwater is laden with alkaline. Back in the 80s, before my folks had connected to SWPP water and prior to my property being connected, I sadly remember all the health problems my cattle endured.

I specifically remember one three-month old calf that had eyes that permanently looked up. It had come on suddenly. The veterinarian felt it was due to an old battery the calf could have come in contact with. Turned out it was getting sick because of the high alkaline in the well water. That was shortly before getting connected to the SWPP and when I lost one-fourth of my herd due to the high amount of alkaline in the well water. As I recall, all the cattle seemed somewhat unhealthy and it was not unusual for vet bills to run about \$200 per head.

When my ranch went on SWPP water, my cattle, and I'm not exaggerating, quickly got healthier. It was like the snap of your fingers quick. The vet bills now average less than \$20 per head and I no longer lose them to drinking poisonous water. Seriously, the herd suddenly became healthy and seemed like it happened overnight with the stock tanks having safe water for them to drink.

When people tell me, quality water cannot make that big of difference, I tell them it does. I have seen, firsthand, the difference it can make in the health of my cattle. Safe water is the most precious resource we have got. When it's gone or you don't have it, as I know firsthand, the quality of all life, goes with it.

Just this last Christmas, my mother was talking about how much our family endured with poor quality water. Looking back, she cannot believe we didn't pack up and move somewhere with better water. Yet, we are North Dakotans and guess we don't give up too easily. We hung in there until the quality water arrived - just in time according to my mother. Today, the roughly 2,000 acres with 100 head of cattle is used only for ranching and growing our own hay. Today, our business and quality of life is thriving - as safe water truly is essential. It all adds up to why I am in complete support of House Bill 1020 and the continued funding of the SWPP.

Robert (Rob) Kudrna [robkudrna@yahoo.com](mailto:robkudrna@yahoo.com)