



North Dakota Township Officers Association

Promoting basic Grassroots Government!

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Senate Appropriations Committee

In Support of HB 1431 with Senate Amendment

Good afternoon Chairman Holmberg and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee. I am Larry Syverson, the Executive Secretary of the North Dakota Township Officers Association. NDTOA represents the nearly 6,000 Township Officers that serve 1,317 organized ND Townships.

Thank you for this opportunity to stand in support of HB 1431 as amended by the Senate. Over the last several sessions the legislature has generously provided several rounds of grants for the townships which have been very helpful and always very much appreciated. But it has always been a bit of an unknown just what the needs are out in the townships; to help gauge those needs the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute hosted a survey of the 1300 organized townships for us. I have uploaded their resulting report in my testimony for today and I will just briefly highlight that report.

The first part of the survey was questions about road maintenance expenses incurred in 2020. On the average townships reported spending \$27,137 for blading and gravel. 42% reported that blading and gravel expenses exceeded what they had budgeted by an average of \$11,837.

Townships reported an average snow removal expense for the year of \$2,226 which was less than typical due to below average snowfall for much of the state. But 8% did report being over budget with \$5,099 the average amount of excess.

\$12,227 was the average reported for road repairs; 32% reported that road repairs exceeded budget by an average of \$17,646.

Obviously, conditions such as weather variations have a great impact on small budgets and townships must re-allocate funds on the fly and any reserves can quickly be consumed when a road is damaged.

The next section of the survey was about roadway projects for which townships lack sufficient funds to complete. 68% reported a list of unfulfilled projects which are listed on the last graph in the report.

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The most common reported project needed was the replacement of deteriorated or undersized culverts. The next was dealing with spots that turn boggy in the spring, commonly called frost boils; that is followed by establishing an adequate gravel base and you can see the list goes on.

We thank UGPTI for hosting the township funding needs survey and providing the report. I hope that synopsis demonstrates the varied needs of the townships attempting to maintain safe roadways for the driving public. Many of those roads are the first mile for so much of the product of North Dakota, the backbone of the state economy.

We realize this proposal to use bonding for transportation infrastructure is no slam-dunk, we know it faces a very rough and rugged path. NDTOA certainly appreciates the work that has brought it to this point, and we will actively support it as it goes forward.

If the Chairman will permit it, I would like to introduce the NDTOA District 6 Director Tim Geinert to give his presentation. Following that, Todd Weber, the NDTOA Vice President has some remarks to close our presentation.

Thank you, Chairman Holmberg and committee members; that concludes my prepared statement; I will try to answer any questions you may have.