



State of North Dakota
OFFICE OF STATE TREASURER
Thomas Beadle, State Treasurer

February 4, 2021

Chairman Vedaa and members of the Senate Government and Veteran Affairs Committee,

For the record, my name is Thomas Beadle, State Treasurer for North Dakota. I'm here today in opposition to SCR 4007 & SB 2282

The Treasurer's office provides oversight of our state's funds including collections, disbursements and investments. We have a fiduciary obligation to our citizens to make sure this is done efficiently and effectively, and that we are providing good stewardship of our taxpayer resources. With the School and University Land Board overseeing assets under management of 13 permanent education trust funds, with total assets in excess of \$5B, I believe the perspective brought by the Treasurer is valuable to the board.

In addition, the Treasurer is the sole member of the Land Board that also serves on the State Investment Board. This allows the Treasurer to bring additional background and investment information to the table to help enhance discussions and better serve both boards in fulfillment of their missions.

One interesting thing of note, as Treasurer I am a member of the National Association of State Treasurers and the State Financial Officers Foundation. In addition to the general information around finance and investment provided by each of these associations that benefit the board, a topic that often comes up due to the roles of Treasurers in other states is unclaimed property, which is handled by Trust Lands here in ND. I believe the Treasurer position is uniquely suited to be able to provide valuable input and perspective in assisting the Board with those duties of the Land Board.

An area of concern that has come up in discussions previously and I know has been brought to me over this proposal, is that should this change take place, the entire Industrial Commission will be on the Land Board, and would constitute a quorum and majority vote of the Land Board. I'm sure there are others that can speak to this with more experience, but I know there are times where these two boards are on opposite sides of a disputed issue, with different obligations and responsibilities in conflict with each other. Having the entire Industrial Commission together on this board, and constituting the majority of this board, could create some obstacles.

I understand that the current driving force behind this change is due to the consternation with the Land auctions held virtually last year. I get that frustration. As a real estate broker who has worked with the sale and lease of land and other real estate for over a decade, I understand that operating in a virtual forum is not the same as being in an auction hall and really does change the game. I have expressed a desire to return to the normal ways of doing things, while leveraging technology where appropriate. But more than anything, we need to make sure that all changes and protocols are communicated clearly so that the players know what to expect, and that feedback is listened to so that we continue to improve.

It is my position that the Treasurer's position provides valuable insight into the Land Board, and I would ask the committee and the assembly to reject efforts to remove this position from the Board.