

Testimony
House Bill 1166
Agriculture Committee | January 9 | 10:30 am

Chairman Thomas,

My name is Barry Ramberg and I have been a Williams County Commissioner since 2009. One of my portfolios as Commissioner is Weather Modification. Thank you for accepting this written testimony in opposition of HB 1166 as I am not able to be in Bismarck today.

In November 2000, the citizens of Williams County voted to establish a Weather Modification Authority (WMA) with about 80% of 'yes' votes to 20% 'no' votes. The vote established the WMA for a 10-year period and beyond that, the Williams County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has the authority to renew the WMA, by resolution, for additional 5-year periods. We did this in November 2010, November 2015, and November 2020.

Since 2000, the Williams County WMA has contracted with the ND State Water Commission's Atmospheric Resource Board (ARB) to participate in the North Dakota Cloud Modification Project (NDCMP). This is an operational program that seeds clouds for hail damage reduction and rain enhancement in western North Dakota.

The two amendments described in HB 1166 are of concern:

- Line 16, 2a: This section states that the ARB would have to obtain approval from the BOCC in the county of each participating WMA prior to conducting weather modification.
 - In our case, this requirement is redundant with the process that is already in place today. As a BOCC, we can pass a resolution to keep the WMA going and the WMA then chooses whether or not to continue the contract with the ARB for weather modification operations. Thereby, the County is already involved with the approval process.
- Line 18, 2b: This section states that the ARB would need to get approval from each county bordering a participating county.
 - This type of approval would undermine the authority of the participating county's BOCC and WMA as well as the opinion of the citizens of the participating county. Each year, prior to, during, and after the weather modification season, the ARB provides us with information and expertise about how the season went, its effects, and future implications. This information and the input from our citizens are what we base our decisions on. Why should the decision of the BOCC in a different County have bearing on this?

Weather modification has been proven to be beneficial for both rain enhancement as well as hail suppression in western North Dakota (<https://www.swc.nd.gov/arb/ndcmp/pdfs/facts.pdf>) and a DO NOT PASS of HB 1166 is respectfully encouraged.

Thank you for your consideration,



Barry Ramberg, Williams County Commissioner