Testimony of Brandon Bochenski, Grand Forks Mayor
Senate Bill 2020
House Appropriations Committee – Education & Environment Division
Bismarck, North Dakota – March 9, 2023

Good morning, Chairman Nathe and members of the House Appropriations Committee Education and Environment Division. I am Brandon Bochenski, the Mayor of Grand Forks. I am here in support of funding for the Red River Valley Water Supply Project funding in Senate Bill 2020, the Department of Water Resources budget.

The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion) and Lake Agassiz Water Authority (Lake Agassiz) are cosponsors of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. Grand Forks is one of the largest end users of the Project and is also a member of Lake Agassiz. The Red River Valley Water Supply Project will mitigate the effects of moderate and severe droughts for the City of Grand Forks and for many North Dakota communities and rural water systems in central and eastern North Dakota.

We are requesting $255 million dollars, to be matched with $85 million in local cost-share, to complete $340 million in project work this coming biennium. A financially efficient construction timeline is necessary to reduce risks and is paramount when you consider the cost of recovery from a decade long drought like the Dust Bowl. Another 1930s-style drought would cost the entire State of North Dakota $33 billion.

I am thankful for the work done so far on Senate Bill 2020 to include a State commitment of $953 million to complete the Red River Valley Water Supply and $175 million for the 2023-2025 biennium. The importance of a strong State partnership cannot be understated, and I want to express my appreciate for your support.

I believe it is prudent for the State and the Project's end users to work together to get the Red River Valley Water Supply Project completed before construction costs increase any further due to inflation. Maintaining the State's commitment to completing construction, as

included in SB 2020, will allow for a cost-efficient construction schedule and will reduce our risk of impacts from continuing inflation.

Thank you, Chairman Nathe and members of the House Appropriations Committee Education and Environment Division for listening to my testimony.