



# WESTERN DAKOTA ENERGY ASSOCIATION

January 16, 2023

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Testimony of:

Geoff Simon, Lobbyist #144

in support of HB 1020 – UGPTI and NDAWN

Government Operations Division – House Appropriations Committee

Chairman Monson and Committee members:

On behalf of the city, county and school district members of the Western Dakota Energy Association (WDEA), we wish to express our strong support for the appropriations requests of the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute (UGPTI) and the North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network (NDAWN) found in House Bill 1020.

WDEA has a longstanding working relationship with UGPTI's Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP), and the training and education it provides to our members. Counties in western North Dakota receive tremendous benefit from the Geographic Roadway Inventory Tool, as well as the information found in UGPTI's local road and bridge needs study. UGPTI and NDAWN have also been active partners in WDEA's development of the Wise Roads project ([www.wiseroadsnd.com](http://www.wiseroadsnd.com)), which is aimed at minimizing weather-related disruptions to heavy oilfield truck traffic.

LTAP staff have worked closely with county road superintendents to maximize the value of data collected through the Wise Roads network of weather stations. We're engaged with LTAP in a research project which involves placing moisture and temperature sensors in gravel roads to better determine when frost or load restrictions need to be placed on roads and when those restrictions can be lifted. NDAWN has provided the technical expertise to help WDEA launch the Wise Roads project, and continues to work closely with us to maximize the value of the huge volume of weather data we collect. To date, with NDAWN's assistance, the project has installed 48 additional weather stations in western North Dakota.

Both UGPTI and NDAWN are delivering valuable services to our agriculture and energy sectors, and are also engaged in cutting-edge research, aimed at supporting the state's major industries' through innovation and development of better management tools to improve productivity and move commerce more efficiently. UGPTI's addition of a western liaison position, in cooperation with the ND Department of Transportation, has brought additional benefits to county, township and tribal governments in western North Dakota.

WDEA urges the Government Operations Division and the full House Appropriations Committee to approve the budgetary items of UGPTI and NDAWN requested in HB 1020.

As always, we appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony and would be happy to provide additional details upon request.

Thank you for your consideration.

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