

Testimony Prepared for the
House Appropriations

March 5, 2023

By: Daniel Schriock PE, Burleigh County Assistant Engineer



RE: Support for SB 2183 – Relating to snow removal grants and reimbursements; transfer; report; and emergency declaration

Chairman Vigesaa and House Appropriations Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 2183. I am Daniel Schriock, the Assistant County Engineer for Burleigh County, and I also serve on the legislative committee for the ND Association of County Engineers. I am here in support of SB 2183.

2022-2023 snow removal costs have made a large impact to the local entities including county, tribal, city, and township budgets. The problem with early season storms is they have a tendency to linger throughout the entire winter season due to continuous wind, which causes snow already on the ground to blow and drift, along with additional snowfall events causing issues with an already at capacity ditch and storage system. For this reason, you will often see counties and other entities out plowing roads, ridging snow in fields, dozing back snow in ditches, and hauling snow away to create additional space in the case for future snow events for days or even weeks after the initial snow event has subsided. These additional costs on top of historic fuel prices have caused costs this winter season to be exceptionally high.

The storms that hit Burleigh County in November and December caused massive snow issues. The November storm filled up the majority of our storage in the ditches and fields, and the low temperatures did little to help from a melting standpoint. After the November storm, we incurred many strong wind days that required our crews to plow roads several times over even after ridging in fields had taken place. The December storm occurring towards the end of the month forced crews to do the best as they could clearing as much space as possible for any potential future storms. Beginning in January, we employed a few local contractors to aid us in snow dozing. This task of using low ground pressure dozers to push the snow back to the Right of Way limits helps to free up storage in the event of blowing snow or another large storm event. Since Burleigh County

does not have the equipment nor manpower to undertake this task, we must take quotes from local contractors who work around the clock to complete this task. This snow dozing can be quite burdensome on county budgets; in Burleigh County's scenario, we saw an approximate cost of \$25,000 - \$30,000 per day that wasn't originally budgeted for. This scenario is not uncommon for counties, where after a storm it may take two weeks to a month to remediate the removal and hauling of snow from a major storm. The changes that were made to the original bill are very beneficial and allows political subs more flexibility in what is reimbursable due to the unforeseen nature of these winter storms.

Chairman Vigesaa and committee members, I would like to reiterate that NDACE supports this bill. Approving these funds for use for reimbursement for some of our snow emergency costs will help to alleviate some of the burden that the state and local government entities were not prepared for when it comes to their budgets.