

Support SB 2183

House Appropriations Committee

March 6, 2023

Good morning, Chairman Vigesaa and Committee members.

I am Larry Syverson from Mayville, I grow soybeans on my farm in Traill County, I am the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors for Roseville Township, and I am also the Executive Secretary of the North Dakota Township Officers Association. NDTOA represents nearly 6,000 Township Officers that serve in more than 1,100 dues paying member townships.

Townships across the state are desperately working to reopen roads and then keep them open so their citizens have access to emergency services, mail, school busses, and other basic needs. Many also need roads open to get to work or haul grain or tend to the needs of livestock.

Back in January we asked our members for snow removal expense figures for the 3-month period October through December for 2022 and the same months for each of the years 2017 through 2021. Many responded that was not the way their contractor or county billed them so they did not have these figures readily available. Those townships were advised that if they have significant snow expenses in the 3-month period they should ask their contractors or counties to gather the information in the proper form as it will be needed if they wish to be reimbursed.

There were about 90 that did respond with expense figures that ranged from \$200 to \$18,235; these expenses are a huge burden on the limited treasury of a township. Seventy-two of the 90 would qualify for reimbursements ranging from \$65 to \$5,486. Thirty-three were over \$1,000 and seventeen were over \$2,000.

Some counties charge their townships a flat service charge for the year, so the townships don't have reportable cost increases. Hopefully SB 2183 will pass and the counties will get reimbursed for part of the added costs so the flat rates will not be increased for the townships.

I have included two photos on the next page. The first was sent to me by a resident in my township. Of course, it shows a snowy road, but the point is this road had been opened the last time we had a snow event, this road has been again reduced to 4-wheel drive pickups only, by drifting because of moderate winds for a couple of days. This cycle is likely to continue until spring and will get worse because of the snow being pushed up in ever higher ridges. The next time the snow moves it will fill the cut to the new height.

Some are investing substantial money to provide road opening help. It seems the snow trail resorts have pulled all their old snow tractors out of the woods and put them on the market for \$30,000 or more. The second photo is a snow dozer or groomer tractor, the machine of choice if snow needs to be pushed away to reopen a road. In snow these will outperform the largest bulldozers, if you can find one, several of these have been put into service across the state but like many other townships mine does not have access to one. Our contractor will come out with bulldozers and run up huge bills to open a few of the worst sites.

We don't yet know what the cost is going to be, it will be a while till all the bills are in and it is possible that March will be even worse than what we saw earlier.

Chairman Vigesaa and Committee Members, that concludes my prepared testimony. On behalf of the membership of NDTOA, I ask that you give SB 2183 your favorable recommendation and I will try to answer any questions.



January 15, 2023 Roseville Township, Trail County

