

HB 1053 Testimony  
Political Subdivisions Committee  
January 5, 2023  
Mary H. Senger, Director  
Burleigh County Emergency Management

Chairman Dockter and members of the Political Subdivisions Committee, my name is Mary Senger, Emergency Management Director for Burleigh County, and I am in support of HB 1053.

Local jurisdictions have the authority to declare an emergency and institute a burn ban pursuant to NDCC 37.17.1-10. I receive calls every time a “burn ban” is issued and have changed declarations to read “burn ban tied to the daily fire danger index” to clarify that everything is not banned all the time. Media, citizens, and visitors continue to focus on the words “burn ban” when actually it’s “burn restrictions”.

Updating NDCC 37.17.1-10 verbiage from “burn ban” to “burn restrictions” accurately depicts the intent of the local jurisdiction. Through the years, we have been educating constituents on the daily fire danger index--a great tool utilizing science to dictate the opportunity to burn on days when it is appropriate rather than banning everything. “Burn restrictions” is a better fit and more accurately defines the intent.