THE CHAMBER
FARGO MOORHEAD WEST FARGO

FMWF Chamber Support for SB 2020

01/19/2023

Chairman Sorvaag and members of the Senate Appropriations - Education and Environment Division Committee:

For the record, my name is Shannon Full, and I have the pleasure of serving as the President/ CEO of the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo (FMWF) Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber's mission is to be a catalyst for economic growth and prosperity for businesses, members, and the greater community. On behalf of our over 1,900 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of Senate Bill 2020, as it relates to the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP).

I would like to start by thanking members of the Legislative Assembly for their steadfast leadership and commitment to the FM Diversion project, protecting our region from the unpredictable Red River. With this project fully funded and construction well underway, our community is thrilled to have permanent flood protection in times of water abundance. Unfortunately, this unpredictability of the Red River leaves many throughout the eastern side of our state without a sustainable supply of emergency water during times of scarcity. The Red River Valley Water Supply Project is the solution to providing central and eastern North Dakota with a sustainable water supply, protecting hundreds of thousands of North Dakotans and thousands of businesses from drought.

Naturally, as our population continues to grow throughout the Red River Valley, land and water usage will also continue to grow. This is why we believe both the protection against flooding and the supply of water are crucial components to the current and future development of our state and region. Just in the last year, our region generated over 18 billion dollars in gross regional product, producing millions in state revenue. This project will not only mitigate drought conditions but will foster economic development by meeting municipal and industrial water demands, ultimately securing and growing that source of revenue. The RRVWSP is key to the sustainability and development of our region's health and economic vibrancy.

The increasing demand for water is not only present across our great state, but across the nation. As you may know, states like California, Arizona, Nevada, and others throughout the western United States are in desperate need of sustainable water sources. Community and business leaders throughout those states have already begun to explore creative solutions that tap into the Missouri River's water supply, such as a pipeline to feed the Colorado River Basin. While the feasibility of these projects may be unknown, their demand for water is certain. The timing of the project is pivotal to securing the necessary rights before the opportunity lapses. The FMWF Chamber respectfully requests that this committee and the Senate Appropriations committee provide this project with adequate and sustainable funding, to allow for its swift completion.

On behalf of our members, I would like to thank the committee for their time and consideration this morning.

Respectfully,

Shannon Full
President/CEO
FMWF Chamber of Commerce
sfull@fmwfchamber.com