

Testimony Prepared for the
**Senate Appropriations – Education and
Environment Committee**

January 23, 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 Sorvaag and Senate Appropriations – Education and Environment 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 snow removal costs have already made a large impact to the local entities including county, tribal, city, and townships. The problem with these early season storms, is that 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 up 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 skyrocket.

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 have done 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's budgets; in Burleigh County's scenario, we are seeing \$25k-\$30k per day in costs that weren'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. We would appreciate your consideration if there are any remaining funds in the first section of this bill after all requests have been submitted, to roll over those remaining funds to the second section of the bill. This would allow political subs and tribes to have the opportunity to request these funds, as the majority of snow removal costs may be in the second half of the winter season. Another consideration would be to reduce the 200% requirement. This would allow for more flexibility in what is reimbursable due to the unforeseen nature of these winter storms.

Chairman Sorvaag and committee members, I would like to reiterate that NDACE supports this bill. Approving these funds for use for snow emergency costs will help to alleviate some of the burden that the State, and Local Entities were not prepared for when it comes to their budgets.