

Testimony Prepared for the
Senate Finance & Tax Committee
March 14, 2023
By Donnell Preskey
North Dakota Association of Counties



RE: House Bill 1245 – Property Tax Statements

Chairman Kannianen and committee members, I'm Donnell Preskey with the North Dakota Association of Counties. In my role at NDACo, I serve as the executive director of the North Dakota County Auditors Association. We stand in support of HB 1245.

We appreciate the work Representative Headland has put into this bill. He was willing to listen to the concerns of county auditors when this bill was heard on the House side, and as a result, made several recommended changes. We are committed to working in partnership with the legislature during the interim on the study proposed in this bill to achieve a product that will result in greater understanding of our property tax system.

The county auditors do have an additional recommendation we would urge this committee to look at.

On page 2, section 2, subsection 2 – we would recommend the following changes:

On line 3: change date from February first to March first.

On line 7: after whether the insert audit is complete. Remove the remaining language.

By ~~February first~~ March first of each year, the county auditor of each county shall provide to the state auditor in an electronic format a financial report showing the ending balances of the county general fund and county road and bridge fund for the preceding calendar year. The county auditor shall provide the report to the state auditor regardless of whether the ~~state auditor is conducting or has completed an audit of the county~~ audit is complete.

Auditors are requesting this change because many counties are still working to close their books for the year by February first, the March first deadline is more realistic. The second change is proposed because not all counties hire the state auditor to conduct their audits, numerous counties hire other audit companies. The committee may also want to consider adding language to clarify the ending fund balances should indicate committed and non-committed funds.