

Testimony to the
Senate Finance and Taxation Committee
Senator Jordan L. Kannianen, Chair

February 28, 2023

Chad Peterson, Cass County Commission Chair

Regarding: House Bill 1495

Chairman Kannianen and members of the Senate Finance and Taxation Committee, I am Chad Peterson, Chair of the Cass County Commission, and I am writing to request a **DO PASS** for House Bill 1495. I am grateful and share the desire to protect the ability for local political subdivision to vote on their portion of property tax authorized in 2017. As public servants, protecting tax dollars and ensuring their proper allocation is one of our core responsibilities.

First, I don't see this as a restructure of existing law as some may allude to, but a clarification of what already exists. Both my state's attorney and I believe the prior law enacted in 2017 was meant to include the ability for us to vote on all property tax exemptions which should include the approval of tax increment financing (TIF) districts. That said, this bill eliminates the debate and formalizes what I believe North Dakota legislative leadership intended from the onset; a law that allows each political subdivision the ability to vote on all property tax exemptions that may impact them.

Second, please don't take this request for the clarification as not supporting incentives like the Renaissance Zones, PILOTs, TIFs, etc. In fact, the exact opposite is the case. I and the Cass County commission historically have supported numerous exemption requests individually and when used as a combination. I simply want the ability to offer more than symbolic input and be better informed as an elected official as to what is transpiring in my county.

Third, to give a sense of scale I have attached a sheet (page 2) that shows what just a few of these TIFs impact is to county and school district income. As noted above, please note I have vocally supported some of these projects as their benefit outweighs 'green field' development (i.e. converting empty farm fields into new developments) or long term reinvestment that is both prudent and beneficial to tax payers long term. However, there are also projects on this list that we had no say on at all.

Finally, the one amendment I would suggest would be to make this retroactive to January first, 2023 so other local political subdivisions are not put into a place where they are pushing districts thru at the last minute before the law is enacted.

Again, I urge a **DO PASS** for House Bill 1495 because individual control by each political subdivision allows leaders to make decisions in the best interest of the constituents directly impacted.

I am always available for any questions should you wish to discuss further.

Sincerely,
Chad Peterson, Cass County Commission Chair
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