



March 13, 2023

Re: In Opposition to Section 2 of HB 1447

Dear Chairwoman Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee:

The North Dakota League of Cities opposes Section 2 of HB 1447 in its current form; however, it is supportive of the remaining sections of the bill.

HB 1447 provides for the creation of the statewide opioid settlement fund and the statewide opioid settlement advisory committee. Section 2 of the bill was amended in the House to state that “[m]oneys collected by the state and the *state's political subdivisions* as a result of opioid litigation must be deposited in the fund.”

In North Dakota there are 11 cities that are receiving opioid settlement payments:

Bismarck*
Devils Lake*
Dickinson
Fargo*
Grand Forks*
Jamestown
Lisbon*
Mandan
Minot
West Fargo
Williston

The cities with an * were individually represented in the national multi district opioid litigation (MDL) cases. The cities without an * were required to participate in the MDL settlement agreements for North Dakota to receive its full allocation because they have a population over 10,000.

Those cities that are receiving funds individually began making plans on how those funds can be put to use to address opioid addiction locally. There are two cities present today to discuss their plans for using the opioid settlement money.

The North Dakota League of Cities respectfully requests that HB 1447 be amended to allow those cities receiving funds to have the option to keep the funds to utilize them for local opioid abatement programs and to report how those funds were used and the outcome of those programs to the state opioid settlement advisory committee at least yearly. The opioid crises needs a multifaceted approach and if the cities, working along with their local public health units discover a solution that works well, the state opioid settlement advisory committee can work to include that programming in the plan to implement it statewide.

Further, the North Dakota League of Cities requests that HB 1447 be further amended to provide the option for cities to choose to remit the funds to the statewide opioid settlement fund if they are not equipped to put together opioid abatement programming locally.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Dassinger Engebretson
Deputy Director and Staff Attorney