

January 30, 2023

Senate Business, Industry and Labor Committee
Senate Bill 2253

Good afternoon Chairman Larsen, and Members of the committee:

My name is Daren Jespersen. I'm a Licensed Contractor from Minot. I have been involved in the industry for over 45 years, I grew up working for my father, and eventually myself. I also hold a N.D. State Plumbing Board Water and Sewer Contractor license.

I also currently serve on the Onsite wastewater Technical Review Committee (OWRTC) established during the 2021 legislative session.

I am here to request a "do pass" on SB 2253.

As a Septic System contractor, the job can sometimes be difficult in good situations. It becomes even more difficult when the rules, standards, and permitting vary from location to location for no reason other than "that's the way we do it here". All while the job is the same or very similar.

It doesn't serve anyone, least of all the Homeowner / Customer when rules vary. It only adds to the cost, and confusion for all involved when things are done one way here and another there. There are contractors who are licensed in three or four different jurisdictions, and things may be done three or four different ways.

The OWRTC, through the past year have done a huge amount of work, to alleviate these issues, and more. We as Professional Contractors have brought rules, and standards to hold ourselves too. We as Professional Contractors have brought forth a tiered licensing system, so new contractors have to gain knowledge and experience to be able to advance to more complicated septic systems. Thereby helping to protect the customer from unneeded expense.

We have brought other industry professionals, and studies in to educate ourselves, and the public health members of the committee.

For example:

Dave Lentz, an engineer who has worked in the wastewater industry for over 25 years.

John Buchanan, over fifty years experience as a soil scientist in Tennessee and a university educator.

Randall O Chelette, the Executive director of the Texas Onsite Wastewater Association.

Dr Steven Berkowitz, A Soil Scientist, and Professor from North Carolina with almost fifty years of experience. Berkowitz and others did a study comparing the performance of Chamber systems, Ez1203h Polystyrene ball systems, and conventional rock and pipe systems.

A study titled: Lateral Movement of Water in the Capillary Fringement under Drainfields. By Amoozegar, Niewoehner, and Lindbo. Which was the basis for reducing the system size by 25%, therefore reducing the cost to the Homeowner.

We brought in Blaine Schatz with the NDSU Extension Service, to assist us with an, in the field soils education course for Contractors, new Contractors, and Enviromental Health Practitioners

at the research stations around the state. Through that Dr. Kelly Rush, Dr. Islander, and Dr. Bezberuah all Professors in Environmental Engineering at NDSU, we're working on an education curriculum at NDSU for Engineering students wanting to specialize in Environmental Engineering.

We as Professional Contractors, and more specifically the North Dakota Onsite Wastewater Association (NDOWRA), have taken over the responsibility of our own Continuing Education. Utilizing nationally accredited courses, and North Dakota specific courses. We utilize NDSU soil evaluators, NCRS soil scientists, and Nationally accredited instructors.

We are Professional Contractors. We take pride in our profession, workmanship, and integrity. The Contractors on the OWRTC have for the last year, at their own expense, taken the initiative to create better industry standards, and provide for more professionalism for all involved .

We as Professional Contractors can regulate ourselves and our industry effectively.

So again, I urge a "do Pass" on SB 2253

Members of the Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I will stand for any questions.