

Testimony HB1531

Sam Wagner
Ag and Food Field Organizer
Dakota Resource Council
1902 E Divide Ave
Bismarck ND 58501
Testimony in Support for 1531

To the House Agriculture Committee,

Mr Chairman,

Increased irrigation in ND has been discussed for decades. This bill has, as one of its focuses in section b.)the failure to implement Garrison Diversion, under the Pick Sloan Act (1944). or under the Dakota Water Resources Act in the early 2000's and its 2024 amendments under Sen. Hoeven. Expanding irrigation has always run into the same problem to make it feasible, federal reimbursement. While MR&I water has received a substantial endowment from the Federal Government, below:

The beginning of the Municipal Rural and Industrial Water Supply Program (MR&I Program) In the 1986 Garrison Diversion Unit Reformulation Act, the federal government authorized a change in the Garrison Diversion Unit project that gave responsibility for delivering water to North Dakota cities, towns, rural communities and growing industrial users. The 1986 Reformulation Act authorized \$200 million for the MR&I Program. An additional \$200 million was authorized in the Dakota Water Resources Act of 2000 to help meet statewide water needs.

The Oaks test Area is the only zone authorized for reimbursement in "Garrison diversion" in all it's formulations

Section d must also be addressed, as it may assume that there is an unlimited supply of water in subglacial aquifers, that are currently used for MR&I water for so many cities and towns, rural water systems, and individual wells utilized for human and livestock use. Irrigation is an exponential user of water compared to MR&I.

Levels in aquifers are monitored for depletion, and aquifers cannot be "mined" Pre-existing water rights must be adhered to, as there are currently no other water delivery systems to supply MR&I water, should irrigation begin to deplete ND's Subglacial aquifers. Alternative water supply schemes would require users, cities, towns, rural water systems and individual wells to pay expensive federal reimbursement for Missouri water. If that is what the future holds, such as supplying the RM&I through, for example, the Red River Valley water supply scheme, then we cannot just then hand over increased volume of water in permits through the state, de facto giving the subglacial aquifer water to irrigators. This would result in giving irrigators free, high quality water that is now under the pre-existing water rights for existing MR&I Users, cities towns

and individuals, and making the MR&I users,(cities towns and individuals) have to pay for federal reimbursed water.

We understand that this is a study, but it would seem that the people that would be investigating this either don't remember the past well enough to know that the conclusion is you can't do this responsibly and waste time in resources once again stating that this is not possible to do responsibly. Or the other end result could be that we make short sighted decisions that could put our water resources in jeopardy.

In short this leads us to believe that we should keep the status quo.

Thank you for your Consideration and we urge a DO NOT PASS