

Testimony of Dakota Resource Council

Before the House Agriculture Committee

In Support of House Bill 1611

Chairman Thomas and Members of the Committee:

My name is Scott Skokos, the Executive Director of Dakota Resource Council, and I am testifying today on behalf of the members of DRC in support of House Bill 1611. DRC is a grassroots organization representing farmers, ranchers, and community members across North Dakota who are committed to ensuring responsible energy development.

House Bill 1611 is a common-sense measure that calls for a study on oil and chemical spills on state highways within the Fort Berthold Reservation. The bill does not impose new regulations or restrictions—it simply ensures that we have accurate information on the risks, response times, and impacts of spills. This is a reasonable and responsible step to protect North Dakotans, our infrastructure, and the industries that rely on safe transportation routes.

The study will bring together key stakeholders, including the Three Affiliated Tribes, the Department of Environmental Quality, and the Department of Health and Human Services, to assess current spill response capabilities and identify opportunities for improvement. Given the importance of Fort Berthold to North Dakota's energy economy, ensuring efficient and effective spill response is in everyone's best interest.

This study is not about stopping or delaying progress—it's about ensuring that oil and chemical transportation is as safe and efficient as possible. A well-informed approach to spill response benefits energy producers, landowners, and local communities alike by preventing costly damages, reducing liability, and ensuring swift cleanups when accidents do occur.

We urge this committee to give House Bill 1611 a "Do Pass" recommendation and support this proactive step toward protecting public safety and strengthening North Dakota's energy and transportation infrastructure. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Skokos

Executive Director

Dakota Resource Council