

Testimony to House Appropriations – Education and Environment Division

Re: House Bill 1020

Date: Wednesday, January 22, 2025

By: Tom Ross, Mayor of the City of Minot

Chairman Mike Nathe and members of the House Appropriations Education and Environment Division, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about House Bill 1020. It's truly an honor to represent the City of Minot and the broader Souris River basin as we work together to secure our region's future.

As you know, the Souris River basin endured a devastating flood in 2011 that displaced more than 11,000 residents in Minot alone and damaged over 4,000 homes and businesses. It's a memory none of us will ever forget. Thirteen years later, while the scars of that disaster are fading, our community's determination to rebuild stronger and safer has only grown.

Thanks to the unwavering support of the Legislature, three Governors, the Department of Water Resources, and our Congressional Delegation, we've made great strides in constructing permanent flood protection. We're proud of the progress we've made, but there's still much to do.

The work completed so far hasn't yet removed properties from the proposed floodplain, and we know the economic toll flood insurance premiums will take if we don't finish what we've started.

We in Minot are committed to doing our part. We've met our local share obligations every step of the way, and we'll continue to meet them—not just in this biennium but in the years to come. This is a shared effort, and the partnership between the state and our community is critical to protecting the lives and livelihoods of everyone in the Souris River basin.

At the same time, we recognize that this is about more than just dollars and construction. It's about momentum—keeping the conversation going, working together, and finding solutions that ensure the long-term safety and resilience of our region.

As mayor, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for the investments you've made in our community and for the trust you've placed in us. Because of your support, we're not just recovering from a flood; we're building a stronger future for generations to come.

Thank you for your time, your partnership, and your commitment to this vital work. I look forward to continuing this conversation and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.