

**North Dakota House of Representatives  
Industry, Business, and Labor Committee  
Chairman - Rep. Jonathan Warrey**

By: Kelli Kronschnabel  
Fire Chief, City of Minot  
[Kelli.kronschnabel@minotnd.gov](mailto:Kelli.kronschnabel@minotnd.gov)  
701-857-4740

**In support of HB 1187**

Chairman Warrey and members of the House Industry, Business, and Labor Committee:  
My name is Kelli Kronschnabel, and I am the Fire Chief for the City of Minot. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony today in full support of HB 1187.

Local governments often shoulder the responsibility and potentially burdensome cost of cleaning up burned and abandoned structures. Unfortunately, cities also often experience the costly aftermath of these tragedies, as some property owners take their insurance money but leave behind a structure that is dangerous to the public and very expensive to demolish. The cost of that demolition and property remediation too often becomes the responsibility of local government when an owner abandons the fire-damaged property.

House Bill 1187 would provide fire departments and municipal governments with another important tool to help recoup at least some of those costs, thereby providing a level of financial relief and neighborhood safety to a community and its residents.

Creating a debris removal lien would offer several safety advantages, not only for us as a fire department, but for an entire community. Such a lien would discourage arson or deliberate neglect, and it would discourage abandonment by property owners after a fire.

For the community, a debris removal lien would help return properties to productive use in a timely manner. A lien would help local governments mitigate fire-related health and safety hazards created by neglected properties, and avoid passing the costs associated with cleaning or demolishing damaged or abandoned properties to residents.

HB 1187 would help protect our fire department and our community's residents from being stuck with the costs associated with abandoned and fire-damaged structures by requiring an insurer to withhold payment of a portion of proceeds until it receives notification that the building has been repaired or cleaned up. The lien would be released if the property owner satisfactorily repairs or cleans up the affected property.

Returning the affected property to a safe condition is paramount to the health and well-being of every community. Having a damaged property returned to a safe condition by the property owner is a win for the entire community, as it removes a potential neighborhood health hazard and it eliminates the need for municipalities to conduct extensive and

expensive clean-up work on private property.

But if the property owner ignores their responsibility, and the City of Minot incur the cost of cleaning and restoring the property to a safe condition, HB 1187 would ensure that those costs don't become a burden to the residents of our community. The lien created by HB 1187 would provide much-needed protection against irresponsible property owners while maintaining the standards of health and safety that community residents expect and deserve.

HB 1187 would be a welcome addition to the physical tools we use every day to protect and serve our community. On behalf of the Minot Fire Department and the City of Minot, thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.