

Testimony Prepared for the
House Political Subdivisions Committee

January 31, 2025

By: Nick West PE, Allendale Township Chairman

RE: Support for HB 1374 – Relating to Open Meeting Exemption for Townships

Chairman Longmuir and members of the House Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1374. My name is Nick West, I'm the Allendale Township Chairman and also serve as the Grand Forks County Engineer, and I also serve as the past president and a member of the legislative committee for the ND Association of County Engineers (NDACE).

Townships are always in a precarious situation regarding open meeting requirements. Being there are only three elected supervisors on the board, having two supervisors together is a quorum. Thus, something as simple as having two supervisors conduct a field visit together for a small culvert repair, without notice, is a violation of open meetings laws. The current law makes it difficult for Townships to conduct basic everyday business. This bill would solve this problem for Townships. Townships supervisors are functionally voluntary positions or paid very little, Townships don't have staff, therefore the three supervisors need to inspect, digest, collaborate, coordinate and conduct all aspects of the Township. It would be prudent for the three supervisors to have some ability to meet and conduct daily business without each gathering technically being a public meeting.

Chairman Longmuir and committee members, Allendale Township (of Grand Forks County) would ask for a Do Pass committee recommendation.

Thank you for your time and service to North Dakota, Nick West.