



North Dakota House Political Subdivisions Committee
Chairman – Donald W. Longmuir
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Testimony: Lance Meyer, PE, CFM
City Engineer
Email: lance.meyer@minotnd.gov
Phone: 701-857-4100

House Bill 1513 Urging a “Do Not Pass” Recommendation

As the city engineer of Minot, I am writing to express my **opposition** to HB 1513 (Relating to the notice to construct, rebuild or repair sidewalks).

In Minot, our sidewalk repair program operates on a complaint-driven basis. When issues are reported by residents, our staff investigates to determine whether the sidewalk constitutes a safety hazard. If the sidewalk is found to be a tripping hazard, a notice to repair is issued to the property owner, in line with the requirements outlined in the North Dakota Century Code (NDCC). At that point, the property owner is provided with 30 days to contact our office with a plan for either performing the repair with a contractor or hiring the city to carry it out. If a property owner requires additional time for unforeseen circumstances, we are flexible and work with them to grant a reasonable extension.

This process prioritizes public safety, as the majority of complaints stem from sidewalks that have shifted, creating a tripping hazard. Without timely repair, these hazards can lead to serious injuries. This brings me to the crux of my concern with HB 1513. The proposed language change in lines 17 and 18, which would extend the required time for repair to "may not be fewer than two years and six months from the date of the notice," significantly undermines public safety.

In a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood filled with young children riding bikes, scooters, and other wheeled devices, 30 months is far too long to wait for the repair of a safety hazard. This extended timeframe will only increase the risk of accidents, potentially leading to injuries that could have been prevented with a more timely response. In the City’s 2021 and 2023 Community Satisfaction Survey, “Overall Maintenance of Streets/Sidewalks” was the highest priority of our residents. Passing this bill will prevent the city from fulfilling this mandate by our residents. Furthermore, if the proposed change is enacted, who will the residents hold accountable for the delay in repairs and the resulting injuries? With the city's hands tied for three construction seasons, the blame will likely fall on the city, even though we would be unable to take action due to legislative restrictions.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to reconsider HB 1513 in its current form. The safety of our residents should always be the top priority, and allowing hazardous sidewalks to remain unaddressed for such an extended period of time is a significant risk we cannot afford to take.

For these reasons, I strongly urge your committee to recommend a **“do not pass”** on HB 1513, and I thank you for your consideration and for your service to our State.

Sincerely,

Lance Meyer, PE, CFM
City Engineer

Cc: Harold Stewart, City Manager
Shane Goettle, Special Assistant City Attorney
Matt Gardner, North Dakota League of Cities