

Greetings, Chair and members of the Committee. I'm Ron Henke, Director of the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT). I'm here to introduce and provide supportive testimony related to HB 1056.

Currently North Dakota Century Code section 24-02-02.1 provides authorization to the director to execute an agreement with the federal government for the construction of a bridge over the Oahe Reservoir. The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has received funding and will lead an effort to begin the preliminary engineering and environmental study to build a new bridge over the Oahe Reservoir along with the connecting roadways. The NDDOT will be serving as a partner and providing technical expertise during the development of the project.

HB 1056 would authorize the director to accept ownership of the bridge and connecting roadways and to place them on the state highway system. This would allow the department to provide ongoing maintenance to the bridge and connecting roadways after they are built. It would also allow for the bridge and connecting roadways to be placed on the state highway system at any time during project development or construction if requested by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. At that point the NDDOT would become the lead for the project.

The NDDOT recommends a "do pass" on HB 1056. This concludes my testimony. Thank you.