

To Dan Ruby Chairman and the Transportation Committee,

I am Joel Hamar Ellendale Township Chairman, farmer and I did serve 5 terms as a Dickey County Commissioner. During those 20 years as a commissioner I have been on both sides of road issues. During that time the commission had 4 Townships that wanted the county to take over the maintenance of a road in their township. These 4 roads amounted to 17 1/2 miles of road. The commission gave the townships the same answer "the county doesn't take over township roads and we have enough trouble doing maintenance on the county roads we have". I was part of those decisions.

HB 1444 is a self-serving bill that will take away 1 1/2 miles of Ellendale Township road. This road goes to the Applied Digital construction site and connects with another township road. The road doesn't connect to another county road. The road is a source of income that the township collected \$300,000.00 plus dollars in the spring of 2024 for overweight truck permits. These funds were used to improve the feeder roads that the township maintains that serve traffic to the construction site. These funds are not tax dollars so we didn't have to ask the property owners of the township for more tax dollars. The township has been told that the construction will be going on for 3-4 more years. The townships maintenance cost will not be going down any time soon.

Applied Digital representative told the township that they need the township to turn the road over to the county so they will be eligible for a program for new industrial projects from the state of ND that will pay for most of the paving and the maintenance for the road. I have asked Applied Digital for the name of the program but they didn't have it.

There is a state program that will help with this. It is the Flexible Transportation Fund Program and since the township can participate in this program, the county doesn't need to take over the road for Applied Digital to utilize the program.

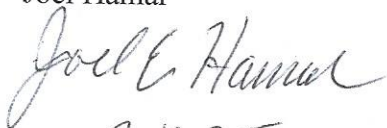
This bill is specifically designed to take money away and control of one township. This only affects Ellendale Township and only aids Applied Digital. The ND State Constitution supports local control.

This bill only pertains to one road in the state of ND; there aren't any counties in the state that are knocking on the doors of townships to take their roads.

I hope you can support a Do Not Pass on HB1444.

Thank you,

Joel Hamar



2-12-25