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Dear Senate Appropriations Committee:

SB 2151 sadly is becoming a necessity for rural access in our counties. Many bridges and cement crossings have lived their lifespan or are not able to accommodate weights required for modern loads and services. All the attention over the years has been into “get by fixes”, and into the major paved road structures. This fall Pembina County had a new “Engineered” Bridge Culvert collapse hours from re-opening to the public, on a Highway. Budget Blown. Really makes me question engineering in 2025. With the advent of new regulations and inspection guidelines imposed by the State many gravel road bridges have had their rating cut so that a loaded school bus, fire truck, or an ambulance cannot pass legally. Major farm to market roads obstructed by a 6-ton bridge. A very common sight now. I served on the waterboard in Pembina County and was involved in the repair of countless bridges left barely standing in the flood of 2013. Seven bridges just on drain 67 alone. Getting to a open farm to market road is getting to be a pretty sketchy endeavor with all the water crossings in eastern ND. I only know of a handful that we cross that aren’t restricted in some manner. Something must be done as we have kicked the can twenty years to many already. Prices aren’t going to get any better, and we need to make hay when the sun is shining. We can have all the money in the coffers we want gaining interest, but when someone gets killed, we probably will know then, what we really should have spent it on.

With respect,

Josh Heuchert