



**Testimony of  
Jennifer Feist, Director of Development  
Valley City-Barnes County Development Corporation  
Valley City, ND**

**HB 1176 (In Opposition)**

**Senator Mark Weber and Members of the Finance and Taxation Committee**

I have served as the Director of Development for Valley City-Barnes County for nearly 38 years. I have worked closely with the City of Valley City, Barnes County Commission and various public, and non-profit organizations and private businesses.

**My opposition is the allowable percentage limit of three percent (3%).**

I agree that reform is needed especially for the elderly and renters who have been hit the hardest.

Communities are being crushed by many high-cost problems without funding sources to help. If the State of North Dakota imposes this limit, then funds must be provided to address aging infrastructure and school facilities. We must have State assistance one way or the other. Otherwise, our hands are tied.

For Valley City, we are not sitting on a pile of money. We also have extraordinary issues such as permanent flood protection that we face. We are working very hard to maintain our business base, continue to create quality jobs, and pursue growth strategies – all with limited financial resources.

I remember many years ago when our valuations were too low. We were told to reevaluate every property, or the State would come in, appraise the properties, and adjust the valuations accordingly. If I'm not mistaken, communities were also told that we needed to keep up with property valuations and increase them by a certain percentage each year. It appears the pendulum has swung too far.

Please amend HB 1176 by removing the allowable percentage entirely. If not, flexibility must be provided so that communities can increase the percentage through City and County governing bodies. A last resort would be to increase the percentage. Thank you.