

Testimony HB 1483
Senate Finance and Taxation Committee
March 12, 2025

Mr. Chairman Weber and members of the Finance and Taxation committee, my name is Steve Farden. I reside in the small town of Maxbass, North Dakota which is about thirty-five miles north of Minot with a population of about eighty people. I am honored to be here today to testify in support of House Bill 1483.

My family has worked in the construction industry in northern and northwestern North Dakota for four generations. It is worth noting that my two daughters have their CDL Commercial Driver's License and work in our business in the oilfields of North Dakota.

Before the Bakken, Maxbass was surrounded by 20% of the producing oil wells in North Dakota. Which meant it was hard not to be involved in the oilfield. We have been in business since the early 1930s and are proud to say we employ 150 of the best people in our area. Across the three businesses we operate, their longevity is 90 years Farden Construction, 80 years Stevens Welding and 118 years Kemper Construction.

There are various businesses in our area that perform work in the oilfield. The work Farden Construction performs includes building and graveling the road into the location and the location the drilling rig will utilize to drill the well and if they find oil, the pumping unit will sit on to get the oil out of the ground. We also haul the drilling rig into and out of the location using large semi-trucks with custom built wenchers/cables on them that lift, load, and haul the heavy buildings and equipment including the oil well derrick into and around the location. We also excavate for water, power, and pipelines. Services other businesses in our area provide include servicing the pumping units to ensure they continue to operate efficiently, hauling water and oil and welding and fabricating various components that make up the various pieces of the drilling rig.

Our employees are all location North Dakotans who live in the area including the counties of Bottineau, Renville, and Ward and in the Turtle Mountains. Our employees take great pride in the work they do.

The "shallow oilfield" as I call it, is very ingrained in our communities from the service companies to the businesses on main street, to our schools, who all rely on the extra traffic from the oilfield to survive.

Since the plug and abandoned program in the State, several fields are now available to be redrilled. You may have heard we have only got 15% of the oil out of the ground with 85% left to get. With the increased costs of everything, this bill would bring the economics back to help make the decision to drill and invest in our region of the state more favorable.

My Father once said they start drilling out west first then when everyone get it tied up, the real "wild catters" show-up in our areas here to drill which include Ward, Bottineau, and Renville Counties.

This bill originally was written as 90,000 barrels of oil up to an 18-month timeframe after completion. My suggestion to your counterparts in the House was to increase this to 125,000 barrels for 36 months. With this change, it would take a 115 barrel of oil a day well to get the full potential of this bill. This change has the ability to change the world in our shallow oilfields of North Dakota.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I encourage you to give HB 1483 a Do Pass Recommendation and I will address any questions the committee may have.