

TO: NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATURE-69<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE SESSION

RE: **TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SENATE BILL 2106**

1/30/2025

Chairman Patten and committee members,

Good morning, my name is Travis Bateman and I reside in McKenzie County. I am here today to speak in favor of Senate Bill 2106.

My thoughts on the topic of weather modification are relatively simple. It is messing with Mother Nature and God's will and in that, as is stated in the literature of the weather modification program, it is experimental. That word alone I find troubling.

For decades North Dakota has been getting milked of funds to provide for experimentation in our skies to take place under the guise of hail suppression and rain enhancement.

Let me give you my observation of what this experiment has done, more often than not since I have been paying attention.

One summer afternoon I left Watford City and was headed to my house. To the west and southwest of the area one could observe a thunderstorm. Being that we have the technology today, I remember looking at the weather app on my phone and thinking, "Nice, we are going to get some rain." The area was parched and very due for some beneficial moisture. I remember contacting some neighbors about the approaching storm so that people could get their outdoor items secured and such. The rain curtain of this storm was wide and matched what I saw on radar to what I could see with my own eyes.

I got home and while outside, I could hear an airplane in the area, towards the approaching storm. I opened the app on my phone called "Flight Aware". It was there that I observed the flight path of the airplane and checked the registration of it, Weather Modification Inc. The app shows the flight path of the plane and it looked just like that of a farmer in his field going back and forth in rows.

Within twenty minutes, what was a five plus mile wide rain curtain had shrunk to maybe one mile wide. And in another ten minutes, what was a storm was reduced to a wimpy looking cloud and it was barely dropping any moisture.

I can tell you that this story matches several over the years with our area having this experimental program flying over our counties. In my opinion, it is nothing short of fraud, waste, and abuse of government funds. There has been nothing conclusive to say either way of what the program does. However, I have seen what it does with my own two eyes.

The weather modification program is nothing short of an exploitative program that is lining certain people's pockets and tied in to our state's water resources programs and also boasts about training student pilots and meteorologists from countries like South Korea.

McKenzie County has \$140,000 budgeted for weather modification in 2025. The contract is set to renew or end in March. Our county may be swimming in the dough from oil and gas but I can assure you that as a citizen of that county, I would much rather see those funds be allocated to far more proven and essential needs. Many citizens are active in ending this program in our county. If the state legislature doesn't end it here this session, we will continue to gather signatures to place it on the ballot for the citizens to decide while we also are applying pressure on the county commission to pull the plug as well.

In 2024, Williams and Mountrail county voters abolished this program, leaving McKenzie, Bowman, and half of Slope counties as participating in this....experiment.

These two and a half counties are all that remains in the entire United States of this worthless program and it needs to die, just like the beneficial rains have every time a storm pops up over our western skies when these planes go up.

That's something else too. These planes are only supposed to go up and spray during severe warned storms, yet it seems to me that every time a cloud popped up in the sky, they come swarming as if our airspace were being invaded.

Others will speak to the health hazards and other observances and knowledge on the waste and failure that this program has been since it has been allowed to exist. It needs to end. The experiment needs to be over. And I say this. You would be hard pressed to find a majority of farmers or ranchers that support this farce continuing.

I thank you and I ask for you to vote for a DO PASS on Senate Bill 2106. Send these planes packing. Shut this experiment down. Let God and Mother Nature dictate whether we have drought or beneficial moisture.

Thank you and I stand for any questions that you may have.

Respectfully,

*Travis F. Bateman*

*Travis F. Bateman  
Watford City, North Dakota*

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