

SB2106

Chair Patten and members of the committee. My name is Todd Beard. I am the Senator from District 23 serving the Williston and Trenton area.

Weather modification has been around a very long time. I'm not going to get into the history of weather modification other than to say over the years county by county across the state people have stopped weather modification practices to be done within their counties. Counties like Ward County and more recently Mountrail and Williams County have removed the weather modification practice within their borders. This was done by the will of the people.

Last session HB1166 was introduced in the House to allow people within the counties still doing weather modification the opportunity to vote in an election as to keeping or eliminating weather modification within their borders. This bill was passed in the House however, it failed in the Senate amid much discussion as to local control. One of the issues with the weather modification statute as it is written, namely 61-04.1-27, is that when the people initially petitioned to allow weather modification to be done in their county, that had to be renewed after 10 years. From that point on the county commissioners were allowed to vote and renew the weather modification program every five years. The only way the people had a voice to oppose these practices was to petition to remove weather modification within their county. After watching Ward county remove weather modification with a vote of around 70%, and witnessing local citizens in Mountrail and Williams County having to gather petitions

to get the weather modification program on the ballot for people to vote on, I decided something needed to be done to give the people back their voice without having to spend their time and personal finances to have a voice at the table. I witnessed these petition drives succeed in Mountrail and Williams counties, both of which removed weather modification by a vote of the people of around 70%. I also understand a petition drive in McKenzie County came close to having enough signatures to get it on the ballot in McKenzie County. I believe it's only a matter of time before McKenzie County will also join the ranks of Ward, Williams and Mountrail County along with all the other counties in the state with the exception of Bowman and part of Slope counties. Watching these citizens fight for the right to vote on this issue, and having to spend thousands of dollars in personal funds to fight the weather modification machine should make you question "what does local control really mean".

As to the merits of weather modification benefiting or hindering I can neither prove nor disprove personally. What I can say is I have witnessed rain systems on radar which appear to have substantial rain potential dissipate after the weather modification planes have flown their routes. It makes me wonder, where's the enhanced rain when the clouds disappear. After all these years there doesn't seem to be any evidence of benefit. In the ad campaigns that were put forward during the election it was cited that there was a financial benefit of potentially 5% or 10% economic gains due to the enhanced rainfall and hail suppression of the weather modification program. My question is which is it 5% or 10%? Where's the proof of their being even 1% enhanced rainfall. Or is it just about the money? Is it just the financial benefit of state and local tax dollars with potential federal

funds tied to a program the doesn't seem to have proof that it benefits anyone except those directly involved in the weather modification program. The time has come to end this program across the state especially in consideration there are only 2 1/2 counties still in the program. There will be more testimony following mine with a perspective on the importance of this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration and ask for a DO PASS recommendation on SB2106. I stand for any questions.