

Testimony in opposition to SB2208

Dear Senators,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 2208. Local counties and townships should retain the right to govern themselves, particularly regarding ordinances related to energy infrastructure projects that directly impact those that reside near such facilities. This bill will strip that authority away, effectively forcing the decisions of local planning and zoning boards under the threat of losing critical funding for rural areas. It is not acceptable for our state government officials to assume it knows how to manage land better than the people who live here, work on the land and pay taxes.

The rural areas of North Dakota have seen a major increase in out-of-state corporations attempting to establish energy infrastructure projects. These companies specifically target low populated regions where there is an abundance of absentee landowners, who typically are the first to sign easements and contracts, because “they don’t have to live here.” Corporations – encouraged by our local politicians – also seek out counties or townships with little to no zoning laws and ordinances.

Without proper local regulations in place, these energy projects can move forward unchecked, despite increasing concerns of the people who live nearby. The long-term risks to residents’ health and safety are completely ignored and/or dismissed.

SB 2208 would remove local control, making it even easier for outside interests to dictate the future of our communities. This bill does not serve the best interests of LaMoure County, let alone the state of North Dakota.

I ask those making decisions to envision what’s truly at stake here. This land is more than just a resource. It’s a way of life. It’s our life. And once all of the infrastructure is put in place, once that hum becomes part of our everyday life, we will never get back what we’ve lost.

I urge you to reject SB 2208 and recommend a **DO NOT PASS** vote.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

With resounding concern,

Susan R. Long, Berlin, ND