

March 24, 2025

North Dakota Legislature 2025

To: Senate Committee - State and Local Government

From: Michael Potts

Regarding: Opposition to HB1259

Dear Senator Roers and Committee Members,

I am a resident of District 46 in Cass County and I am writing to respectfully express my opposition to House Bill 1259 which would require North Dakota residents to observe Standard Time throughout the year. I understand this bill has passed the House. I have communicated my opposition to the District 46 delegation and have urged the Governor to veto this bill if it passes the Senate. Let me explain why.

This change would create the equivalent of a statewide time zone changes for 238 days or over 65% of the year impacting all residents and especially those who live near bordering states. As an example, this one-hour time difference between North Dakota and Minnesota would create confusion and disruption for the thousands of residents, workers and companies along the border who need to cross to the other state every day for business, day care, work, shopping, medical appointments, school, sports and many other community events. Residents along the border or who need to connect with others outside our state would be required to continually clarify and convert meeting times to ensure people connect at the right time.

I work for a large company headquartered in Fargo and daily I need to connect with other employees, company partners and vendors for all time zones of the country and around the world. We are also heavily dependent on a local workforce that resides in the Red River Valley region, both in North Dakota and Minnesota. This change would introduce new challenges to daily work life and personal scheduling that could create obstacles for workers and companies that need to juggle the realities of work hours, daycare hours, business hours and other activities for 238 days per year. Even watching the evening news or other television programming would be disrupted. Program scheduling could be an hour earlier as television networks and local news would presumably still align with the respective time zone during day light savings time. The potential daily obstacles from this change would be significant. I also ask you to consider the cost of this change whether direct expenses, rescheduled activities or lost productivity.

I recall that Bismarck and Mandan used to be in separate time zones and the resulting confusion and disruption eventually resulted in a shift westward of the mountain time zone. I would expect residents in western or southern North Dakota may also have similar concerns with being in a different time than Montana or South Dakota for over six months. I encourage you to gather broad input as I would expect most residents will have an opinion about the trade-offs of eliminating a one-hour time change two days a year versus dealing with daily

realities mentioned above for 238 days per year.

I believe any perceived personal health benefits from eliminating the twice a year time change would be negatively offset by the mental stress and lost productivity of having to navigate between the equivalent of two different time zones for over six months of the year. Plus, as Northerners, we cherish the few warm months we can be outdoors in the summer and to give up an hour of evening sunlight would be a loss. North Dakota is vitally connected to its immediate regional neighbors, the rest of the nation and the world. I believe this change would create more challenges for us than it solves. North Dakota is not in same situation as Arizona where they experience significant afternoon summer heat and may prefer to shift outdoor work, recreation and events to earlier in the day.

I would anticipate challenges with passage of this bill and suggest the only way to potentially make this work is to implement on a national level rather than state by state. I don't believe this bill as written is good policy for North Dakota and respectfully urge a do not pass.

I appreciate you listening to my concerns.

Michael Potts

District 46
Cass County
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