

March 25, 2025

To: Senate Committee – State and Local Government

From: Maria Mack

Regarding: Opposition to HB1259

Chair Roers and members of the Committee,

I am writing to testify in opposition to HB 1259. If North Dakota were to stay permanently in Standard Time, I believe there would be many negative repercussions that would impact families, public and mental health, as well as local businesses and farmers.

I would first like to provide a map illustrating surrounding time zones during Daylight Savings (March-November) if North Dakota were to pass this bill:



The Southwest corner of our state would be set to the same time zone as California, totally separate from the areas surrounding it. And some of our most populated areas such as Fargo, Grand Forks, and Wahpeton would be in a different time zone than their Minnesota sister cities.

There are many people who work or go to school in North Dakota but live in Minnesota and vice versa. With a time difference for two thirds of the year, this could cause Minnesotans who work here to leave their jobs, pull kids from ND private schools and club activities, and take their children out of North Dakota daycares. It would also put a strain on North Dakotans who work or go to school in Minnesota as they would be on a different time table than the rest of their family.

This time difference could also put members of the public at risk. Minnesota's bars currently close one hour later than North Dakota's. Between Minnesota's 2:00am bar close and this bill's proposed time difference, that provides residents of Fargo and Grand Forks two additional hours of drinking. This has the potential to lead to more alcohol related incidents. Additionally, according to the National Safety Council, deadly traffic accidents are more likely to happen at night. Because this bill would reduce daylight hours in the evenings, it could potentially increase our rates of fatal car accidents.

Looking at the other side of the state, those in Mountain Time would also suffer. They already have an earlier sunrise and sunset due to the time difference. But this bill would mean their earliest sunrise would be 3:56am and their latest evening would be at 7:49pm. When it is time to harvest in the fall, their sunsets will be before 7:00pm. These early evenings will also hurt North Dakota's largest tourist attractions, Medora and Teddy Roosevelt National Park. Unless we expect tourists to wake at 4am, these shorter days will be a detriment to the park. Less time to hike and explore the loop and less time for outdoor activities in the town. It will also harm the Medora musical who would have to do their show entirely after sunset for the majority of their season.

Several 'In Favor' testimonies referenced studies indicating Standard Time increases our exposure to natural light. That may be the case in southern states as being closer to the equator provides more consistent sunrise and sunset times, but it is not the case for Northern states like North Dakota. If this bill were to pass, from the end of May through the beginning of July, North Dakotans would see a sunrise before 5am or before 4am for those in Mountain Time. Unless it is expected that everyone rises with the sun, this bill would cause North Dakotans to lose sunlight exposure, not gain it. And with our lack of sun in the winter, which puts us at risk for Seasonal Affective Disorder and Vitamin D deficiencies, I believe these long summer days are very important to our overall mental and physical wellbeing.

On a more selfish note, I think this is very inconvenient on a level that far outweighs the negatives of "losing an hour of sleep". It is inconvenient for booking flights, driving to other states, knowing what time TV events start, readjusting to a new time zone, losing an hour of sun in the summer, needing to invest in some *really* good light blocking blinds for those 5am sunrises, and *still* needing to keep track of daylight savings time because it would impact North Dakotans' lives, even if we don't observe it ourselves.

For these reasons and those mentioned by others, I urge you to oppose HB 1259. Thank you for your consideration.

*/s/ Maria Mack*