

North Dakota Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 4014
State and Local Government Committee
Testimony of Todd Hall
February 21, 2025

Good morning, Chairman Roers and members of the State and Local Government Committee. My name is Todd Hall, from Dunn and Burleigh counties. I am a private tax-paying citizen and a landowner. I own land in the State of North Dakota and within the boundaries of the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation. The federal Indian reservation is within the boundaries of North Dakota Legislative District 4. My ranch headquarters are located there, on the badlands south of Mandaree, ND just above the Little Missouri river near an old Hidatsa village known to my ancestors and me as "Night Walker".

I AM HERE IN SUPPORT OF SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 4014.

This study is needed to ensure fairness and equal access to State government, especially in regards to participation and representation. Within Legislative district 4 alone there are vast differences in population demographics which are not only political or racial but also geographical. Lake Sakakawea cuts the district in two. History tells us that east river and west river North Dakota don't always see eye to eye on the issues. The same can be said to this very day.

There are various paradigms creating jurisdictional challenges not only between tribal, state, and federal entities; but it should be noted, that within the boundaries of the Fort Berthold Reservation there are 7 different counties located there. The creation of legislative sub-districts such as 4A and 4B only adds to the mess and creates more confusion. There is a dilution of representation as opposed to the rest of the State's legislative districts as a result.

I have one suggestion for an amendment to the resolution. Instead of any references to "tribal land", change the wording to "reservation land" when and wherever used in the resolution. Reservation gives a more accurate and all-encompassing description of the lands and legal terms actually used regarding land types, ownership, and involving the various jurisdictions within the boundaries of any federal Indian reservation located within North Dakota.

Although "Tribal land" much like the term "Trust land" is an actual legal term describing certain land ownership; it is also an ambiguous term when used loosely can create confusion, bad policy, and unconstitutional laws.

Words matter.