

1999 SENATE TRANSPORTATION

SB 2391

1999 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB 2391

Senate Transportation Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date February 5, 1999

| Tape Number | Side A | Side B | Meter # |
|--|--------|--------|------------|
| 1 | x | | 1403-4280 |
| February 11, 1999-2 | x | | 4950-5,428 |
| | | | |
| Committee Clerk Signature <i>Staci A. Schaeffbauer</i> | | | |

Minutes:

SENATOR SCHOBINGER called the hearing on SB 2391 to order. Committee members present included: Sens. R. Schobinger, D. Mutch, D. Cook, V. Thompson, and D. Bercier.

Senator Bob Stenehjem and Senator David O'Connell were absent.

JERRY HJELMSTAD, ND LEAGUE OF CITIES testified in support of SB 2391 (see testimony).

SENATOR SCHOBINGER On the DUI side of things, the cost of a DUI is substantially higher than \$300. Do you think this fine will be a substantial deterrent?

JERRY HJELMSTAD It would help the situation and it would be for those cases where the individual would be concerned about it.

WILLIAM FLESCH, MINOT POLICE DEPARTMENT testified in support of SB 2391.

Initially, I had requested an increase to \$5,000 but a compromise was reached and \$3,000 was

settled on. I contacted the League of Cities to ask for a sponsor. On February 1, I had seen the copy of the bill and found that the dollar amount had been lowered to \$2,000. While we would support this increase, I feel that \$3,000 would still be appropriate. It does not take much damage to add up to \$3,000 (he showed a number of pictures). Minot, in November through January of 1999, investigated a total of 472 crashes. Of this total, 187 were under \$3,000 and 203 under \$2,000. At the dollar amount proposed we would have to investigate 70% of these accidents. If the amendment went through we would investigate only 40% of those crashes and save 287 man hours. The damage amount up to \$2,000 is not significant for a police report. The dollar damage has not been increased since 1987. I would request an amendment to \$3,000. Law enforcement would support either amounts for this bill to pass.

SENATOR COOK If I own a body shop and someone brings a car in to me with \$2,000 worth of damage, do I have to report that to anybody.

WILLIAM FLESCH You need to notify us if the damage is over \$1,000.

SENATOR COOK Most vehicles that have been reported have a sticker on them, right?

WILLIAM FLESCH Yes.

SENATOR COOK If the damage at an accident was minimal and you were called, would you report that the damage was minimal and then leave?

WILLIAM FLESCH We inform the people what the state law requires and although we do not have to send the report if they wish it we will file the support with the state.

SENATOR SCHOBINGER Is that a judgment call at the scene?

WILLIAM FLESCH Yes, sir. Body shops try to give a ball park figure to deal with so we have an idea when we get there.

SENATOR COOK If any individual in the accident wants a report, the officer anywhere in the state will write the report?

WILLIAM FLESCH I can't speak for other places in the state, but the way we train our officers if they want a report filed, we file it.

SENATOR COOK My daughter was in an accident and although the damage was under \$1,000 he still got a ticket through an investigation and that ticket was a difference of \$500 to me because I have a \$500 deductible. The ticket was put on his shoulders. Sometimes it may not be a lot of damage, but through an investigation someone could be charged for it.

WILLIAM FLESCH If two parties are involved then both parties must feel that the accident is not reportable.

SENATOR BERCIER If you use your judgment and they go to the body shop and they refuse to fix it, what do you do?

WILLIAM FLESCH We will issue a damage vehicle release sticker that they can then put in the vehicle and it will be fixed.

SENATOR BERCIER What if an individual ran into something and found out after it was at the body shop that the damage was more and he didn't report it?

WILLIAM FLESCH There are provisions in the law that they must take reasonable grounds to notify the person's property even though the damage may not be enough to report it to us.

SENATOR MUTCH Who gets the fine money?

WILLIAM FLESCH The money goes into a general fund in Minot.

KENT OLSON, ND INSURANCE AGENTS testified in support of SB 2391. The problem in selling auto insurance relating to this bill is that anytime there is an accident of \$1,000 or more it

is reported and it goes on the driving record. Our involvement comes in with the driving record.

With inflation, these costs have gone up. If we raise the threshold we will have an easier time with the underwriters. We would like to see the threshold raised to \$2,000.

AL COVLIN, NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION testified in opposition to SB 2391 (see testimony).

SENATOR SCHOBINGER The problem with \$1,000 is that a scratch will do \$1,000 worth of damage on a \$50,000 vehicle. Should it be set at a percentage of the vehicle?

AL COVLIN \$1,000 is good for traffic engineers because many times an accident is an indication that something is happening.

SENATOR THOMPSON The last time the threshold of damage was raised was in 1987. After twelve years, do we need to readjust the threshold?

AL COVLIN Many vehicle are not worth the amount they want to raise the threshold too, but they are still important to the owner. We still need the information.

SENATOR SCHOBINGER Is there any more testimony?

SENATOR SCHOBINGER We will close the hearing on SB 2391.

February 11, 1999- Tape 2- Committee Discussion

SENATOR COOK I move a Do Pass on SB 2391.

SENATOR SCHOBINGER I second that motion.

A roll call vote was taken (6 Yeas, 0 Nay, and 1 Absent and Not Voting).

FISCAL NOTE

(Return original and 10 copies)

Bill/Resolution No.: SB 2391 Amendment to: _____

Requested by Legislative Council Date of Request: January 27, 1999

- Please estimate the fiscal impact (in dollar amounts) of the above measure for state general or special funds, counties, cities, and school districts. Please provide breakdowns, if appropriate, showing salaries and wages, operating expenses, equipment, or other details to assist in the budget process.

Narrative:

For the biennium, there would be approximately 1300 convictions (based on 1998) for violation of section 39-08-09. This could provide additional revenue of approximately 325,000 if the full amount of \$300 per violation is assessed.

We are unable to determine the dollar breakdown between the Common Schools Trust Fund and the dollars received by cities, as the number of convictions are not divided by district court or city court.

- State fiscal effect in dollar amounts:

| | 1997-99 Biennium | | 1999-2001 Biennium | | 2001-03 Biennium | |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------|
| | General Fund | Other Funds | General Fund | Other Funds | General Fund | Other Funds |
| Revenues | -0- | -0- | -0- | See Narrative | -0- | See Narrative |
| Expenditures | -0- | -0- | -0- | -0- | -0- | -0- |

What, if any, is the effect of this measure on the budget for your agency or department:

- For rest of 1997-99 biennium: -0-
(Indicate the portion of this amount included in the 1999-2001 executive budget:)
- For the 1999-2001 biennium: -0-
(Indicate the portion of this amount included in the 1999-2001 executive budget:)
- For the 2001-03 biennium: -0-

- County, city, and school district fiscal effect in dollar amounts:

| 1997-99 Biennium | | | 1999-2001 Biennium | | | 2001-03 Biennium | | |
|---------------------|--------|------------------|-----------------------|--------|------------------|---------------------|--------|------------------|
| Counties | Cities | School Districts | Counties | Cities | School Districts | Counties | Cities | School Districts |
| -0- | -0- | -0- | -0- | | -0- | -0- | | -0- |

We are unable to determine the dollar breakdown between the Common Schools Trust Fund and the dollars received by cities as the number of convictions are not divided by district court or city court.

Signed: *Marsha M. Lembke*
 Typed Name: Marsha M. Lembke
 Department: Drivers License and Traffic Safety
 Phone Number: (701) 328-4865
 Date Prepared: February 2, 1999

Date: February 11, 1999
Roll Call Vote #: 1

1999 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB 2391

Senate Transportation Committee

Subcommittee on _____
or
 Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken do Pass

Motion Made By Sen. Cook Seconded By Sen. Schobinger

| Senators | Yes | No | Senators | Yes | No |
|-----------------------------|-----|----|----------|-----|----|
| Sen. B. Stenejem-Chairman | X | | | | |
| Sen. R. Schobinger-V. Chair | X | | | | |
| Sen. Duane Mutch | X | | | | |
| Sen. Dwight Cook | X | | | | |
| Sen. David O'Connell | X | | | | |
| Sen. Vern Thompson | X | | | | |
| Sen. Dennis Bercier | | | | | |
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Total (Yes) 6 No 0

Absent 1

Floor Assignment Sen. Schobinger

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
February 12, 1999 3:23 p.m.

Module No: SR-29-2817
Carrier: Schobinger
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2391: Transportation Committee (Sen. B. Stenehjem, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2391 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

1999 HOUSE TRANSPORTATION

SB 2391

1999 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 2391

House Transportation Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date March 11, 1999

| Tape Number | Side A | Side B | Meter # |
|--|--------|--------|---------|
| 1 | | x | 0-15.8 |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Committee Clerk Signature <i>Jamie Ken</i> | | | |

Minutes:

CHAIRMAN KEISER OPENED THE HEARING ON SB 2391; A BILL RELATING TO NOTIFICATION OF MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS.

JERRY HJELMSTAD, ND League of Cities, introduced SB 2391 for Sen. Sand. (See written testimony).

CHAIRMAN KEISER questioned why the League of Cities had an interest in this bill.

JERRY said that the Chief of Police Association approached them about it and the interest came from there.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM FLESCH, Minot Police Department, testified in support of SB 2391. (See written testimony).

DICK PECK, North Dakota Peace Officer's Association, testified in support of SB 2391. He said that they simply wanted to go on record in support of the bill.

Page 2

House Transportation Committee

Bill/Resolution Number Sb 2391

Hearing Date *Click here to type Hearing Date*

KENT OLSON, North Dakota Professional Insurance Agents Association, testified in support of SB 2391. He said that they would like to see the threshold go up and that this bill would do that.

They support the bill.

REP. THORPE asked Kent to rectify this jump.

KENT said that they would support 3 or 5,000.

AL COVLIN, Department of Transportation, testified in opposition to SB 2391. (See written testimony).

CHAIRMAN KEISER CLOSED THE HEARING ON SB 2391.

COMMITTEE ACTION

REP. BELTER moved a DO PASS on SB 2391. REP. KELSCH seconded the motion. The motion carried.

ROLL CALL - 7 YEA, 5 NAE, 3 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING

FLOOR ASSIGNMENT - REP. KELSCH

Date: 3/12
 Roll Call Vote #: 1

1999 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 2391

House Transportation Committee

Subcommittee on _____
 or
 Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken DO PASS

Motion Made By Rep ^{MEYER} ~~MEYER~~ Seconded By Rep Lemieux

| Representatives | Yes | No | Representatives | Yes | No |
|----------------------------------|-----|----|-----------------------|-----|----|
| Representative Keiser, Chair | | ✓ | Representative Thorpe | ✓ | |
| Representative Mickelson, V. Ch. | | ✓ | | | |
| Representative Belter | | ✓ | | | |
| Representative Jensen | ✓ | | | | |
| Representative Kelsch | | ✓ | | | |
| Representative Kempenich | | | | | |
| Representative Price | | ✓ | | | |
| Representative Sveen | ✓ | | | | |
| Representative Weisz | | | | | |
| Representative Grumbo | | ✓ | | | |
| Representative Lemieux | ✓ | | | | |
| Representative Mahoney | ✓ | | | | |
| Representative Meyer | ✓ | | | | |
| Representative Schmidt | | | | | |

Total (Yes) 6 No 6

Absent 3

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Date: 3/12
Roll Call Vote #: 2

1999 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 2291

House Transportation Committee

Subcommittee on _____
or

Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken More Am

Motion Made By Rep Price Seconded By Rep Mickelson

| Representatives | Yes | No | Representatives | Yes | No |
|----------------------------------|-----|----|-----------------------|-----|----|
| Representative Keiser, Chair | | | Representative Thorpe | | |
| Representative Mickelson, V. Ch. | | | | | |
| Representative Belter | | | | | |
| Representative Jensen | | | | | |
| Representative Kelsch | | | | | |
| Representative Kempenich | | | | | |
| Representative Price | | | | | |
| Representative Sveen | | | | | |
| Representative Weisz | | | | | |
| Representative Grumbo | | | | | |
| Representative Lemieux | | | | | |
| Representative Mahoney | | | | | |
| Representative Meyer | | | | | |
| Representative Schmidt | | | | | |

Total (Yes) FR No 1

Absent _____

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Line 8 change ^{\$2000} back to \$1000

Date: 3/12
 Roll Call Vote #: 3

1999 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 2391

House Transportation Committee

Subcommittee on _____
 or
 Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken DO NOT PASS

Motion Made By Rep Belter Seconded By Rep Kelson

| Representatives | Yes | No | Representatives | Yes | No |
|----------------------------------|-----|----|-----------------------|-----|----|
| Representative Keiser, Chair | ✓ | | Representative Thorpe | | ✓ |
| Representative Mickelson, V. Ch. | ✓ | | | | |
| Representative Belter | ✓ | | | | |
| Representative Jensen | | ✓ | | | |
| Representative Kelsch | ✓ | | | | |
| Representative Kempenich | | | | | |
| Representative Price | ✓ | | | | |
| Representative Sveen | | ✓ | | | |
| Representative Weisz | | | | | |
| Representative Grumbo | ✓ | | | | |
| Representative Lemieux | ✓ | | | | |
| Representative Mahoney | | ✓ | | | |
| Representative Meyer | | ✓ | | | |
| Representative Schmidt | | | | | |

Total (Yes) 7 No 5

Absent 3

Floor Assignment Rep Kelson

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
March 12, 1999 1:08 p.m.

Module No: HR-45-4665
Carrier: R. Kelsch
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2391: Transportation Committee (Rep. Keiser, Chairman) recommends DO NOT PASS (7 YEAS, 5 NAYS, 3 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2391 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.

1999 TESTIMONY

SB 2391

Minot Police Department

Minot Police Department
515 2nd Ave. SW.
Minot, ND 58701

Phone 701-857-4701
Fax 701-839-4804

February 5, 1999

TESTIMONY ON SB 2391

BY

CAPTAIN WILLIAM FLESCH
COMMANDER OF POLICE OPERATIONS
MINOT POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, My name is William Flesch. I am the Commander of Police Operations with the Minot Police Department.

I am speaking on behalf of the Minot Police Department in support of SB 2391, requesting an increase in the dollar damage amount for required reporting.

Initial I had requested the North Dakota Peace Officers Legislative committee to consider an increase to \$5000.00. After much discussion a compromise was reached and the \$3000.00 was settle on.

I then contacted a member of the North Dakota League of Cities to ask for their support and for them to find a sponsor.

I was contacted back and advised that they had a sponsor and was proceeding with introduction.

This past Monday, February 1, 1999 I printed a copy of the bill and found that the dollar amount had been lowered to \$2000.00. While the Minot Police would support this increase, I feel that the increase to \$3000.00 is appropriate.

I have pictures from a Minot body shop showing various damage and the dollar amount associated with the damage. The picture, with a finger pointing to the damage, is damage on my own personal vehicle. The finger is mine also. As you can see from these pictures it dose not take much damage to add up to \$3000.00. \$3000.00 in damage is not a significant accident by today's cost.

If the vehicle in picture #1 hit the vehicle in picture #3, the damages could have resulted and the dollar damage is \$1893.50. As this amount would be close to the \$2000.00 dollar amount purposed, this accident would probable be investigated by Law Enforcement.

If the vehicle in picture #1 had collided with the vehicle in picture #4 the dollar damage would total \$2547.63, definitely a reportable crash over \$2000.00, but under the \$3000.00. Is this a significant accident.

If the vehicle in picture #2 crashed into the vehicle in picture #5 the total damage would be \$5434.92. Does this look like a significant crash. Keep in mind the damage in picture #5 is just the door and the door post. Actually, according to the body shop person, this damage was done by an s-10 pickup which received less than a \$1000.00 of damage.

I submit that these are what if types of crashes, however I think it still reflects the dollar damages and the need to raise the dollar amount for reportable accidents.

The Minot Police Department during Nov & Dec. of 1998 and Jan. of 1999 investigated a total of 472 crashes. Of this total 287 were under \$3000.00 and 203 under \$2000.00.

At the dollar amount proposed we would have to investigate 57% of these crashes.

At \$3000.00 we would investigate 40% of these crashes. and save approximately 287 man hours.

When you look at the pictures and the dollar damage associated with them I believe that you would agree with me that the damage amount up to \$3000.00 is not significant damage requiring a state report.

The dollar damage has not been increased since 1987 when it was increased from \$600.00 to the present \$10000.00.

I respectfully request that SB 2391 be amended to the dollar amount of \$3000.00. and that you consider a do pass on this amount.

I also respectfully submit that Law Enforcement would support either of these two dollar amounts that the committee would consider to pass.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me this time before you.

If you have any questions I would be happy to answer them.

SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
February 5, 1999

North Dakota Department of Transportation
Allan L. Covlin, Traffic Operations Engineer

SB 2391

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, NDDOT opposes SB 2391, which increases the reporting threshold on property damage crashes from \$1,000 to \$2,000.

Although this bill would reduce the workload in our Drivers License division, the crash information available to develop roadway safety improvements would be greatly reduced. To determine the effect of raising the threshold to \$2,000, our Drivers License division studied property-damage-only crashes for the last week of September 1998. During that week, 47% of the property-damage-only crashes would not have been reported. In 1997, the latest year for which we have complete data, about 5,900 fewer crash reports would have been filed with NDDOT.

One of the primary factors in justifying a safety project is the number of crashes. The recommended corrective measures vary according to the type of crash. The overall affect of raising the threshold would be a reduction of our roadway safety program. The estimated reduction to almost 50% of the crash reports would reduce the reporting of many types of crashes, including rear-end, sideswipe, angle, turning, and animal-collision crashes, and being run off the road.

Because there would be fewer reports filed with NDDOT and thus less evidence of safety problems, fewer safety projects would be planned -- until a serious crash occurred. This includes projects to install or revise traffic signals, intersection flashing beacons, rumble strips, roadway lighting, delineation (including pavement markings), traffic control signing (including stop or yield signs), or improvements to intersection sight-distance. It also includes flattening roadway in-slopes, changing roadway alignment, or removing obstacles near the roadway. The reduction of information would also hinder our response to private citizen and local government requests for safety improvements.

We have two additional concerns with this bill.

- A motorist involved in a crash NOT reported by a police officer might have problems getting paid by the insurance company if the company required a copy of the police crash report to process a claim.
- It would be more difficult to evaluate vehicle safety features such as safety belts or air bags, or vehicle types (large combination vehicles, buses, farm vehicles), because the number of reports of crashes resulting in no occupant injury would be reduced.

We empathize with the amount of paperwork that law enforcement must complete, but it's in all North Dakotans' best interest to NOT increase the threshold limit.

To: Senate Transportation Committee
From: Jerry Hjelmstad, North Dakota League of Cities
Date: February 5, 1999
Re: Senate Bill No. 2391

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, on behalf of the North Dakota League of Cities, I am testifying in support of Senate Bill No. 2391. This bill amends section 39-08-09 of the North Dakota Century Code. That section currently requires the driver of a vehicle involved in an accident resulting in injury to or death of any person, or property damage to an apparent extent of at least one thousand dollars, to give immediate notice of the accident to law enforcement officials. There is a penalty of \$50 for violating this section.

Senate Bill 2391 would increase the vehicle damage amount for a reportable accident from one thousand to two thousand dollars. I have attached a section of Chapter 466 of the 1987 session laws which shows that the last time this amount was changed was in 1987 when it was amended from six hundred to one thousand dollars. It would seem reasonable to increase this amount to reflect the increased costs of repairs today.

This bill would also increase the penalty for failing to give immediate notice of an accident. We have received comments from law enforcement officers that individuals would rather wait and report the accident the next day and pay the \$50 fine rather than risk the possibility of a DUI charge. Increasing the amount of the fine from fifty dollars to up to three hundred dollars would make this a less attractive option.

We ask that you recommend a "do pass" on Senate Bill 2391.

39-08-09. Immediate notice of accident - Penalty. The driver of a vehicle involved in an accident resulting in injury to or death of any person, or property damage to an apparent extent of at least ~~six~~ hundred one thousand dollars, shall immediately give notice of the accident to the local police department if the accident occurs within a municipality, otherwise to the office of the county sheriff or the state highway patrol. Any person who violates this section must be assessed a fine of fifty dollars. The name of the motor vehicle insurance policy carrier and the policy number of the driver, or if the driver is not the owner of the vehicle, then the motor vehicle insurance policy carrier and the policy number of the owner of the vehicle, must be furnished to the law enforcement officer investigating the accident. If the driver does not have the required information concerning insurance to furnish to the investigating law enforcement officer, then within five days of the accident the driver shall supply that information to the driver's license division in the form the division requires.

The commissioner may suspend the license or permit to drive and any nonresident operating privileges of any person failing to comply with the duties as provided in sections 39-08-06 through 39-08-09 until those duties have been fulfilled, and the commissioner may extend the suspension not to exceed thirty days.

Approved March 20, 1987

Filed March 23, 1987

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

March 12, 1999

North Dakota Department of Transportation
Allan L. Covlin, Traffic Operations Engineer

SB 2391

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, NDDOT opposes SB 2391, which increases the reporting threshold on property damage crashes from \$1,000 to \$2,000.

Although this bill would reduce the workload in our Drivers License division, the crash information available to develop roadway safety improvements would be greatly reduced. To determine the effect of raising the threshold to \$2,000, our Drivers License Division studied property-damage-only crashes for the last week of September 1998. During that week, 47% of the property-damage-only crashes would not have been reported. In 1997, the latest year for which we have complete data, about 5,900 fewer crash reports would have been filed with NDDOT. That would leave only about 10,800 crashes on which our roadway safety program would be based (89 fatal crashes, 4,000 injury crashes, and 6,700 property-damage crashes).

A primary factor in justifying a safety project is the number of crashes. The recommended corrective measures vary according to the type of crash. The overall affect of raising the threshold would be a reduction of our roadway safety program. The estimated reduction to almost 50% of the property-damage crash reports would reduce the reporting of many types of crashes, including rear-end, sideswipe, angle, turning, animal-vehicle, and run-off-the-road.

Because there would be fewer reports filed with NDDOT and thus less evidence of safety problems, fewer safety projects would be planned -- until a serious crash occurred. This includes projects to install or revise traffic signals, intersection flashing beacons, rumble strips, roadway lighting, delineation (including pavement markings), traffic control signing (including stop or yield signs), or improvements to intersection sight-distance. It also includes flattening roadway in-slopes, changing roadway alignment, or removing obstacles near the roadway. The reduction of information would also hinder our response to private citizen and local government requests for safety improvements.

While the reduction of safety projects would have no fiscal effect on NDDOT, it would have a fiscal effect on local governments. NDDOT would shift funds from the safety program to other programs, such as roadway maintenance. Currently, the local government is responsible for 10 percent of the project cost on safety projects. If, because of the low number of reported crashes, a project can't be considered a safety project, the local government would be required to finance 20 percent of the cost. For example, a traffic signal costs about \$150,000; the local cost would increase from \$15,000 to \$30,000.

Local governments may have an additional expense if this bill passes. If, because of the low number of reported crashes, a project can't be considered a safety project, the remaining 80 percent of the cost could not be paid with federal safety funds. Funding would have to come from the local government's urban roads allocation. About \$300,000 to \$600,000 in federal safety funds per year may be reallocated to other programs with the passage of this bill.

We have two additional concerns with this bill.

- A motorist involved in a crash NOT reported by a police officer might have problems getting paid by the insurance company if the company required a copy of the police crash report to process a claim.
- It would be more difficult to evaluate vehicle safety features such as safety belts or air bags, or vehicle types (large combination vehicles, buses, farm vehicles), because the number of reports of crashes resulting in no occupant injury would be reduced.

It's in all North Dakotans' best interest to NOT increase the threshold limit.

To: House Transportation Committee
From: Jerry Hjelmstad, North Dakota League of Cities
Date: March 12, 1999
Re: Senate Bill No. 2391

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Senate Bill 2391 would increase the vehicle damage amount for a reportable accident from one thousand to two thousand dollars. I have attached a section of Chapter 466 of the 1987 session laws which shows that the last time this amount was changed was in 1987 when it was amended from six hundred to one thousand dollars. It would seem reasonable to increase this amount to reflect the increased costs of repairs today.

This bill would also increase the penalty for failing to give immediate notice of an accident. We have received comments from law enforcement officers that individuals would rather wait and report the accident the next day and pay the \$50 fine rather than risk the possibility of a DUI charge. Increasing the amount of the fine from fifty dollars to up to three hundred dollars would make this a less attractive option.

We ask that you recommend a "do pass" on Senate Bill 2391.