

# MICROFILM DIVIDER

OMB/RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION

SFN 2053 (2/85) 5M



ROLL NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

1167

2001 HOUSE TRANSPORTATION

HB 1167

2001 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1167

House Transportation Committee

☐ Conference Committee

Hearing Date January 12, 2001

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
I	X		3.228
		X	2.300
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Lauren B. Fink</i>			

Minutes: Rep. Weisz - Chairman opened the hearing on HB 1167, A Bill for an act to amend and reenact section 24-02-42 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the amount of department of transportation education financial aid and to expand eligible areas of study.

Tom Freier, Deputy Director of the Department of Transportation spoke on this bill introduced at the request of the Department of Transportation. See a copy of his testimony attached.

Rep. Weisz - Chairman:( 3862 ) Are you currently able to find the 'kick-in' for the funds available?

Tom Freier: Yes. If I may expand, I think the increase in federal funding to the State of North Dakota has been about 50%. The is true of everybody else in the country and there programs are much larger than ours. The stress on the labor is greater there, thus we find folks who come to us leave and go to Minnesota or to Missouri or to New Jersey. We have difficulty in retention. But

we need as first step is to look at the recruitment. We would like to give our people in our Universities more of an incentive.

Rep. Polecat - Vice Chairman have you ever had problems in getting financial aid back due to the increased funding or are you 100% recovered?

Bob Evans, Human Resources Department of the DOT, I can't tell you for sure -- I know that we have very little difficulty with the repayment procedures through contacts by members of my staff. If we have problems we can turn that over to a collection agency, but it is not a big problem.

Rep. Thorpe ( 4184 ) Do you have any percentages of the number of students who take advantages of the program that go to work for the department? Or who works for the department for a short time and then goes on to take a different position or in other words what is the retention?

Bob Evans: Again I don't have the details but I would say that we retain 60 or 70%.

Rep. Ruby: Mr. Freier, I have problem of leaving out the specifications for civil engineers, civil engineering technology, geology, --- to reword it to meet the needs of the department. What other disciplines are you in need ?

Tom Freier: They are many, the purpose of that language is to reflect the current needs at any given time. Currently, we have a problem in the information technology area -- we also have problem in finding mechanics? The purpose of that language is to give the department some flexibility at a year or two or several years down the line.

Rep. Thoreson: ( 4425 ) You mention mechanics, just what you talking about there?

Are we talking about some special type of mechanic -- diesel mechanics, or ?

Tom Freier: They are folks who work in our district offices, we have about three per district.

They work on all of our snow plow trucks - diesel or otherwise.

Rep. Thoreson: ( 4545 ) Apparently they have to get their course work at institutions of higher learning?

Tom Freier: Yes and Whapeton does provide it.

Bob Evans: The day of the shade tree mechanic is past, at least for our organization we do need to hire individuals who have the training to be able to understand the electronics, the hydraulics, and those systems necessary to keep our equipment operating.

Rep. Thoreson: Does this training have to be done in state to get this funding?

Bob Evans: The training does not have to be at one of our institutions.

Rep. Thoreson: There are schools for mechanics but not higher education such as Hansons Trade school.

Bob Evans: I don't know if we could approve a course at the Hanson Trade school or not. My thought is we could if the program would meet the standards of studies we have.

Rep. Thoreson: Maybe that wording 'higher education' shouldn't be in there.

Bob Evans: I may have to look at that and get back to you.

Tom Freier: We will have to study that. All of these areas the sophistication is so much greater than the past. Those pieces of equipment are very expensive and we need to be able to fix them.

Rep. Weisz - Chairman: Rep. Thoreson, the current law says the education must occur in the State.

Page 4  
House Transportation Committee  
Bill/Resolution Number HB 1167  
Hearing Date January 12, 2001

Rep. Pollert - Vice Chairman: (4978 ) For these financial programs, do you have a set of guidelines? And what particular programs you are looking for? And do you also have an approval process where someone would have his A-okay and that you have checked his credentials and whatever?

Bob Evans: We do solicit verifications from the students. We do insure they are enrolled in the course of study before we provide the dollars to them through the institutions financial aid office. We also do follow up to make sure they are continuing to participate and maintaining satisfactory grade levels.

There being no one else wishing to appear for or in opposition the HB 1167 Chairman Weisz closed the hearing for testimony. ( 5020 - end of Side 1 Tape 1 ).

Discussion followed. (Tape 1 side B meter at about 2300 ).

Rep. Carlson: I move a 'Do Pass' on HB 1167.

Rep. Mahoney: I second that motion.

Roll call vote: 14 aye 0 nay 0 absent

Rep. Hawken was assigned to carry the bill on the floor.

# FISCAL NOTE

Requested by Legislative Council  
12/26/2000

Bill/Resolution No.: HB 1167

Amendment to:

1A. **State fiscal effect:** *Identify the state fiscal effect and the fiscal effect on agency appropriations compared to funding levels and appropriations anticipated under current law.*

	1999-2001 Biennium		2001-2003 Biennium		2003-2005 Biennium	
	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds
Revenues						
Expenditures				\$20,000		\$20,000
Appropriations				\$20,000		\$20,000

1B. **County, city, and school district fiscal effect:** *Identify the fiscal effect on the appropriate political subdivision.*

1999-2001 Biennium			2001-2003 Biennium			2003-2005 Biennium		
Counties	Cities	School Districts	Counties	Cities	School Districts	Counties	Cities	School Districts

2. **Narrative:** *Identify the aspects of the measure which cause fiscal impact and include any comments relevant to your analysis.*

Current law allows the expenditure of \$10,000 annually for the scholarship program. The proposed legislation doubles the amount to \$20,000 annually.

3. **State fiscal effect detail:** *For information shown under state fiscal effect in 1A, please:*

A. **Revenues:** *Explain the revenue amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each revenue type and fund affected and any amounts included in the executive budget.*

B. **Expenditures:** *Explain the expenditure amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each agency, line item, and fund affected and the number of FTE positions affected.*

This legislation would increase the DOT expenditures for scholarships by \$20,000 per biennium.

C. **Appropriations:** *Explain the appropriation amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, of the effect on the biennial appropriation for each agency and fund affected and any amounts included in the executive budget. Indicate the relationship between the amounts shown for expenditures and appropriations.*

Because this legislation would increase the DOT expenditures by \$20,000 per biennium, the DOT appropriation would likewise need to be increased by \$20,000.

Name:	Bob Evans	Agency:	NDDOT
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Phone Number: 84365

Date Prepared: 12/27/2000



Date: 01/12/01  
Roll Call Vote #:

2001 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES  
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1167

House Transportation Committee

☐ Subcommittee on \_\_\_\_\_  
or  
☐ Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken Do Pass

Motion Made By Rep. Carlson Seconded By Rep. Mahoney

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Robin Weisz - Chairman	✓		Howard Grumbo	✓	
Chet Pollert - Vice Chairman	✓		John Mahoney	✓	
Al Carlson	✓		Arlo E. Schmidt	✓	
Mark A. Dosch	✓		Elwood Thorpe	✓	
Kathy Hawken	✓				
Roxanne Jensen	✓				
RaeAnn G. Kelsch	✓				
Clara Sue Price	✓				
Dan Ruby	✓				
Laurel Thoreson	✓				

Total (Yes) 14 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Rep. Hawken

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

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)**  
January 12, 2001 11:38 a.m.

**Module No: HR-03-0935**  
**Carrier: Hawken**  
**Insert LC: . Title: .**

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**HB 1167: Transportation Committee (Rep. Welsz, Chairman) recommends DO PASS**  
**(14 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1167 was placed on the**  
**Eleventh order on the calendar.**

2001 SENATE TRANSPORTATION

HB 1167

2001 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1167

Senate Transportation Committee

☐ Conference Committee

Hearing Date 3-2-01

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	x		48.0- End
1		x	0.0-3.9
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Suzette Schaf</i>			

Minutes: **HB 1167** relates to the amount of department of transportation educational financial aid and to expand eligible areas of study.

No one present to testify.

Hearing closed.

Senator Mutch motions to Do Not Pass. Seconded by Senator Espegard. Roll call taken. 4-0-2.

Senator Mutch is carrier.

Senator Mutch motions to reconsider HB 1167. Seconded by Senator Espegard. Voice vote.

5-0-1.

Hearing reopened on HB 1167 on 3-2-01.

**Tom Frier:** (NDDOT; Supports) See attached testimony.

**Senator Stenchjem:** Can you provide us with when these people received the scholarships?

**Tom Frier:** Some folks may have gone back to further their education. Most received this aid while in college.

Page 2  
Senate Transportation Committee  
Bill/Resolution Number HB 1167  
Hearing Date 3-2

**Senator Espegard:** How many years do they have to work for you to not have to pay back the loan?

**Tom Frier:** As many years as life of loan is. So if have 3 years worth of aid, you would have to work for us for three years to not have to pay it back. This is another tool to help us stay fully staffed. Employees retire and this brings new employees in.

Hearing closed.

Senator Espegard motions to Do Pass. Seconded by Senator Trenbeath. Roll call taken. 6-0-0.

Floor carrier is Senator Mutch.

3-2

## 1167

Committee

or



تاریخ: ۱۳۹۸/۰۵/۰۵

Do Not Pass

match

Espe gard

[illegible]

(Yes) 4 No 0

2

mut ch

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

3-2

## 1167

Committee

☐ Subcommittee on \_\_\_\_\_  
or  
☐ Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number

Action Taken Reconsider

Motion Made By Mutch Seconded By Espeared

[illegible]

Total	(Yes)	No
100	50	50

Absent Volke Verbal 5-0-4

### Floor Assignment

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

Roll Call Vote #:

## 1167

## Senate Transportation

Committee

☐ Subcommittee on

or

☐ Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number

### Action Taken

**Motion Made By**

Seconded

By

[illegible]

Total

(Yes)

No

**Absent**

### Floor Assignment

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



**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)**  
March 2, 2001 1:10 p.m.

Module No: SR-36-4719  
Carrier: Mutch  
Insert LC: . Title: .

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**HB 1167: Transportation Committee (Sen. Stenehjem, Chairman) recommends DO PASS and BE REREFERRED to the Appropriations Committee (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1167 was rereferred to the Appropriations Committee.**

2001 SENATE APPROPRIATIONS

HB 1167

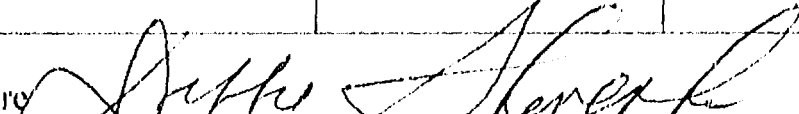
2001 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1167

Senate Appropriations Committee

☐ Conference Committee

Hearing Date March 12, 2001

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	'X		12.8-26.8
Committee Clerk Signature 			

Minutes:

Senator Nothing opened the hearing on HB 1167.

Tom Freier, Deputy Director, ND Department of Transportation (DOT), testified (testimony attached) giving a background and overview.

Senator Nothing: Looking at the list on page 2, why isn't there any graduates in 2002, what occurred here?

Tom Freier: We try to be consistent with the program, I'll have Bob Evans explain this to you.

Robert Evans: In 2002, we did not have any participants the last 2 years or prior with this current federal funding bill. The engineering force has been cut back and the employment commitment with this program.

Senator Nothing: The bill currently shows the student receiving \$1,000 and this is increasing to \$2,000. Are other students listed receiving money or just new students?

Robert Evan: Each year it is given on an individual basis.

Senator Schobinger: The recent graduates with the department, on page 2, line 11 of the bill, salary increases the same as other employees, explain.

Robert Evan: The program started in 1967 when technology was not as complex and competitive field. Now we are looking at experienced programs in other technical fields with the expanded language.

Senator Bowman: The program is funded through the Department of Transportation. Does this mean that these funds used could have been matching federal dollars.

Tom Freier: For this program we use highway funds not federal funds, these are state funds which could be used for matching federal dollars. This program utilizes the work force and we need those employees.

Senator Bowman: Then you won't receive all the federal dollars for the workforce, isn't this a contract dilemma?

Tom Freier: Federal dollars are important. We try internally to design 75% of the work we do. There is stress with the internal work force as well as outside of DOT. There is competition inside to do the work. The tools we are looking at shore up the employment at DOT by looking for young people. We really should involve High School students for this program for this scholarship program.

Senator Nething: Your increase will be \$20,000 biennium.

Tom Freier: That is correct.

Senator Thane: Vacancies, are they being created by individuals for better pay?

Tom Freier: Yes, you will always have vacancies; many do stay some retire and need replacement. We have lost employees to other state and the private sector. Most employees leaving work force within 7-8 years and we can't hold them. We need competitive salary.

Senator Andrist: You recruit these students and they agree to employment after graduation.

How long is their commitment?

Tom Freier: Their commitment is the same amount of time they have been in the program by years. We should start talking to younger students, with high school and universities consistently.

Senator Grindberg: Is there dollars for crane operators from AGC or DOT or for any blue collar training?

Robert Evan: Not in our Human Resource Department but we do have an apprenticeship program with federal contracts to certain operators.

Senator Bowman: Have you ever done a study on the contracts for privatization, to actually be more efficient, that all contracts be contracted to the private sector?

Tom Freier: An audit is done on all projects with federal dollars. Not sure in how to tell of continued effectiveness.

With no further testimony, the hearing was closed.

Senator Nething: Is there a motion on this bill? Yes, Senator Solberg moved a Do Pass, seconded by Senator Holmberg. Took committee vote, 14-0-0. Motion carried. Senator Mutch to carry this bill.

Tape #1, Side A, meter 26.8

Date: 3-12-01

Roll Call Vote #: \_\_\_\_\_

**2001 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES**  
**BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1167**

Senate Appropriations Committee

☐ Subcommittee on \_\_\_\_\_  
or

☐ Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken Do Pass

Motion Made By Senator Solberg Seconded By Senator Holmberg

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Dave Nothing, Chairman	✓				
Ken Solberg, Vice-Chairman	✓				
Randy A. Schobinger	✓				
Elroy N. Lindaas	✓				
Harvey Tallackson	✓				
Larry J. Robinson	✓				
Steven W. Tomac	✓				
Joel C. Heitkamp	✓				
Tony Grindberg	✓				
Russell T. Thane	✓				
Ed Kringstad	✓				
Ray Holmberg	✓				
Bill Bowman	✓				
John M. Andrist	✓				

Total Yes 14 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Senator Mutch

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

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)  
March 12, 2001 9:58 a.m.

Module No: SR-42-5311  
Carrier: Mutch  
Insert LC: . Title: .

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**HB 1167: Appropriations Committee (Sen. Nething, Chairman) recommends DO PASS**  
(14 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1167 was placed on the  
Fourteenth order on the calendar.

2001 TESTIMONY

HB 1167



# **HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**January 12, 2001**

**North Dakota Department of Transportation  
Tom Freier, Deputy Director**

## **HB 1167**

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HB 1167 relates to NDDOT's education financial aid program. The purpose of this ongoing program is best summarized in the last sentence of the bill: "to assure a source of qualified trained employees for the department." The legislation was first passed in 1967 and has been amended four times, most recently in 1991. The program is funded from the state highway fund.

HB 1167 increases the dollar amount allowed for each participant and the total amount provided for the program. Individual awards may be increased to \$2,000 per year and overall expenditures for the program would increase to \$20,000 per year, \$40,000 per biennium. We have also broadened the scope of the program to allow participation from students in information technology, vehicle mechanics, and other fields for which the department has experienced hiring difficulty.

The recent increase in federal funding for highway construction, combined with decreased enrollment in civil engineering programs, has created a nationwide shortage of civil engineers and technicians. Our department has been particularly hard hit. Of our 350 engineering and related positions, the department has over 20 vacancies. Some of these positions remain vacant even though we've made repeated employment offers.

The department has mounted an extensive campaign to promote employment. We attend all career fairs and make classroom presentations. We have started a joint venture with NDSU to develop a design center on campus in order to provide part-time engineering design work for students. Before interview days, we've even sponsored informational events for students. We always include some NDDOT engineers and technicians in promotional events.

Over the past four years, NDDOT has increased salaries for engineers and two-year technical school graduates. Frankly, the results so far this year have been disappointing. We have been successful in hiring only 1 of the 5 December graduates to whom we extended offers. Our scholarship program has historically been an important factor in bringing employees into the organization. All scholarship recipients are required to sign a contract to accept employment with the department after graduation or to repay the money received. Currently, ten students are involved. I have attached a list of their names, a list of current employees who previously participated in the program, and a draft contract.

## **LIST OF CURRENT SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS**

<u>NAME</u>	<u>HOMETOWN</u>	<u>GRADUATION DATE</u>	<u>TEMP EXPERIENCE - YEAR 2000</u>
Christopher Beggs Civil Engineering - NDSU	Williston	May 2003	Worked in Williston
David Brunelle Civil Engineering - NDSU	Bismarck	April 2003	Worked in Materials
Katie Fischer Const. Engineering - NDSU	Rhame	Dec 2001	Worked in Dickinson
Peter Jewett Civil Engineering Tech - NDSCS	Rogers	May 2001	Worked in Valley City
Josey Milbradt Civil Engineering - BSC	Hazellton	May 2003	
Kris Neset Const. Engineering - NDSU	Minot	May 2001	Worked in Minot
Joseph Pihlaja Civil Engineering - NDSU	Osage, MN	May 2003	Worked in Fargo
Brandon Sandberg Const. Engineering - BSC	Kenmare	May 2003	
John Wolf Civil Engineering - BSC	Zeeland	May 2003	
Tyler Wollmuth Civil Engineering - BSC	Moffit	May 2003	Worked in Bismarck

**NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION  
PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP/GRANT RECIPIENTS  
EMPLOYED AS OF JANUARY 10, 2001**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Current Classification</b>	<b>Yrs with NDDO T*</b>
DeMers, Dale	Engineering Technician IV	31.5
Dvorak, Robert	Transportation Engineer II	35.5
Gangl, Larry	Administrative Transportation Engineer II	9
Gendreau, Cal	Administrative Transportation Engineer II	24.5
Henke, Ron	Transportation Engineer III	7.5
Horner, Ron	Administrative Transportation Engineer II	27
Horner, Tim	Administrative Transportation Engineer III	22.5
Kuntz, Shawn	Transportation Engineer II	5.5
Levi, Grant	Chief Transportation Engineer	18
Levi, Kevin	Administrative Transportation Engineer II	21
Marohl, Sengaroun	Transportation Engineer II	7.5
Paulson, Lanny	Transportation Engineer II	8.5
Peterson, Walt	Administrative Transportation Engineer II	21
Richter, Jeff	Transportation Engineer II	14
Ryen, Ed	Transportation Engineer III	19
Rosendahl, Darcy	Administrative Transportation Engineer I	18
Schumaker, Clayton	Transportation Engineer III	18
Sprynczynatyk, Dave	NDDOT Director	<1 mo.**
Stecker, Mitch	Transportation Engineer III	5
Weber, Diana	Transportation Engineer II	3.5
Weigel, Roger	Administrative Transportation Engineer I	19
Ziegler, Francis	Administrative Transportation Engineer III	30.5

Number of recipients\*\* = 21  
 Total years of service\*\* = 366  
 Average years of service\*\* = 17.43

\*rounded to nearest ½ year

\*\*not included

**North Dakota Department of Transportation  
EDUCATIONAL GRANT/EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT**

THIS AGREEMENT, entered into this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, is between the state of North Dakota, acting by and through its Director of Transportation, hereinafter referred to as NDDOT, whose address is 608 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0700, and \_\_\_\_\_, hereinafter referred to as the student, whose address is \_\_\_\_\_.

In consideration of the mutual covenants set forth, it is agreed:

NDDOT shall pay to the student in accordance with the following fee schedule, providing the student complies with the terms of this agreement, remains a qualified post secondary student of civil engineering, civil engineering and survey technology, or construction engineering in the state of North Dakota, and upon graduation the student accepts employment with NDDOT for a period equal to the term during which payments were received. The salary will be equal to current salaries paid to graduates in that particular field.

Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

Term/Years	Amount
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

NDDOT agrees to offer the student employment during the summer months while the contract is in force.

If the student is ordered to active duty status or inducted into the armed forces before graduating, the provisions of this contract shall be held in suspension during the student's term of service and shall be extended upon the student's return.

If the student is ordered to active duty status or inducted into the armed forces after graduation, the student be granted a leave of absence without pay until the student returns, at which time the student shall return to the student's employment with NDDOT to fulfill the provisions of this agreement.

If the student enlists into the armed forces to fulfill an ROTC obligation after graduation, the provisions of this contract shall be held in suspension for four years, at which time the student shall fulfill the provisions of this agreement. If the student voluntarily reenlists into the armed forces, after the initial ROTC obligation has been met, the student must repay NDDOT all funds received, plus interest, as stated in provisions of this agreement.

The student must repay NDDOT all funds received, plus six percent interest per annum, if the student: 1) fails to graduate; 2) does not accept employment with NDDOT; or 3) fails to maintain a 2.0 grade point average or higher. The repayment must be made within a period equal to the time for which the benefits were received.

## PAY BACK SCHEDULE

In consideration of the educational loan by NDDOT, I promise to repay to NDDOT the amount received plus interest at six percent (6%) if I refuse or terminate my employment or refuse to perform the duties of my employment.

Total amount of educational grant received: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Repayment Amount	Payment Due
\$ _____	_____
\$ _____	_____
\$ _____	_____
\$ _____	_____
\$ _____	_____
\$ _____	_____

It is agreed that, for the purposes of this contract, defenses of minority (age) or statute of limitations are hereby waived.

NDDOT may terminate this agreement upon written notice to the student for the following reasons:

1. For violation of this agreement or other cause.
2. Changes in funding or program requirements from federal, state, or other applicable sources. In such case the student is entitled to keep payments received from NDDOT without any further obligation to NDDOT.
3. Current staffing and work load conditions at NDDOT make hiring the recipient inappropriate. In such case the student is entitled to keep payments received from NDDOT without any further obligation to NDDOT.

EXECUTED the date last below signed.

STUDENT

NORTH DAKOTA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NAME (TYPE OR PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

DIRECTOR (TYPE OR PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Recommended for approval by:

HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR (TYPE OR PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SFN 9765 (Div. 40)  
A.G. Approved 4-18-90; 5-00  
RM Consulted 8-97

# **SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**March 2, 2001**

**North Dakota Department of Transportation  
Tom Freler, Deputy Director**

## **HB 1167**

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HB 1167 increases the dollar amount allowed for each participant and the total amount provided for the program. Individual awards may be increased to \$2,000 per year and overall expenditures for the program would increase to \$20,000 per year, \$40,000 per biennium. We have also broadened the scope of the program to allow participation from students in information technology, vehicle mechanics, and other fields for which the department has experienced hiring difficulty.

The recent increase in federal funding for highway construction, combined with decreased enrollment in civil engineering programs, has created a nationwide shortage of civil engineers and technicians. Our department has been particularly hard hit. Of our 350 engineering and related positions, the department has over 20 vacancies.

The department has mounted an extensive campaign to promote employment. We attend all career fairs and make classroom presentations. We have started a joint venture with NDSU to develop a design center on campus in order to provide part-time engineering design work for students. Before interview days, we've even sponsored informational events for students. We always include some NDDOT engineers and technicians in promotional events.

Over the past four years, NDDOT has increased salaries for engineers and two-year technical school graduates. After again raising our entry-level salaries, the department has had some success attracting graduates who will join our organization this spring. However, we are still only one of many private and public employers trying to attract the few candidates currently entering these occupations. It is highly unlikely that—without more tools—we will be able to fill all remaining vacancies this spring. In the midst of this severe workforce challenge, the state is faced with managing the largest road program in its history.

Our scholarship program has historically been an important factor in bringing employees into the organization. All scholarship recipients are required to sign a contract to accept employment with the department after graduation or to repay the money received. Currently, ten students are involved. I have attached a list of their names, a list of current employees who previously participated in the program, and a draft contract.