

MICROFILM DIVIDER

OMB/RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION

SFN 2053 (2/85) 5M



ROLL NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

2348

2005 SENATE TRANSPORTATION

SB 2348

2005 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB 2348

Senate Transportation Committee

☐ Conference Committee

Hearing Date 2-03-05

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1		x	0-2725
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Mary K. Monson</i>			

Minutes:

Chairman Trenbeath opened the hearing on SB 2348 relating to funding of public transportation.

Senator Nething (District 12) Introduced the bill. He said it was not complicated. It provides that the motor vehicle registration fee be increased from \$2 to \$3 for each motor vehicle that is registered. Line 22 and 23 increases the county dollars based on the same ratio. This money goes to provide public transportation out in the counties. It started out as a seniors program and has broadened into more of that now. The riders have increased a great deal on the system. This bill would raise, as the fiscal note indicates, \$1,550,000. That money would then be distributed out to the counties which would be approximately \$750,000 per year. Currently, the program requires those entities that run it to come up with moneys from their mill levy that they have for other senior purposes, along with the other funding which is primarily their own fundraising to the tune of about \$550,000. That alone is indicative of the shortage of funds for this program.

When we take money away from the county mill levy for seniors, that takes it away from other programs. This increase would permit enough dollars for at least a given time period to not only close the gap but to let them continue with the program and the increased riders, that we anticipate. One of the biggest problems they have in the appropriations with the human service budget is the increased numbers of older citizens that rely on our state programs. This program is no different.

Senator Trenbeath said it appears from the code sections that this began in 1989 at \$1. In 1999 it went to \$2.

Mike Williams (Fargo City Commissioner) Testified in support of SB 2348. See attached testimony.

Julie Bommelman (City of Fargo) Was present to answer any questions the committee had.

Rick Thoms (Executive Director of Souris Basin Transit, Minot, ND) Testified in support of SB 2348. See attached testimony.

Carol Wright (Director of James River Transit) See attached testimony in support of SB 2348.

Senator Warner asked about the cost of typical fares for both urban and rural riders.

Carol Wright answered that the best way to do that was to go around the room and let those in attendance answer. (Meter 2140)

Leon Dietrich (Custodian, Bismarck Public Schools) See attached testimony in favor of SB 2348.

Alan Walter (Director of Public Works for the city of Minot) was present to say that the city of Minot was in support of SB 2348.

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Senate Transportation Committee

Bill/Resolution Number SB 2348

Hearing Date 2-03-05

Todd Feland (Public Works Director, Grand Forks, ND) submitted written testimony on behalf of Mayor Michael R. Bown in support of SB 2348.

There was no opposition to SB 2348.

The hearing on SB 2348 was closed.

Senator Nething made an observation to those in attendance that it is always a possibility this bill could be amended into another bill. If that were to occur, he suggested not calling their legislators to tell them to vote for SB 2348 because it may have been merged into another number. Instead, he suggested doing it in the context of saying, "support the transportation match money" or something of that nature.

2005 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB 2348

Senate Transportation Committee

☐ Conference Committee

Hearing Date 2-16-05

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	x		1090-1255
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Mary K Monson</i>			

Minutes:

Chairman Trenbeath opened SB 2348 for discussion.

Senator Nething motioned a **Do Pass**. Seconded by **Senator Warner**.

Roll call vote 5-0-1. **Passed**. Floor carrier is **Senator Nething**.

FISCAL NOTE

Requested by Legislative Council
01/24/2005

Bill/Resolution No.: SB 2348

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.*

	2003-2005 Biennium		2005-2007 Biennium		2007-2009 Biennium	
	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds
Revenues				\$1,550,000		\$1,550,000
Expenditures				\$1,550,000		\$1,550,000
Appropriations				\$1,550,000		\$1,550,000

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

2003-2005 Biennium			2005-2007 Biennium			2007-2009 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.*

This bill increases the public transportation fee from \$2 per year to \$3 per year.

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.*

This bill is expected to generate \$775,000 per year in additional revenue for the Public Transportation Fund.

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.*

The expenditures would increase \$1,550,000 as the DOT would have that amount of additional revenue to distribute.

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.*

The DOT would need a corresponding increase to their appropriation.

Name:	Keith Kiser	Agency:	NDDOT
Phone Number:	328-2725	Date Prepared:	01/27/2005

Date: 2-16-05
Roll Call Vote #: _____

2005 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO 2348

Senate _____ **TRANSPORTATION** _____ Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Do Pass Refer to appropriations

Motion Made By Sen. Nething Seconded By Sen. Warner

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Senator Espegard	✓		Senator Bercier		
Senator Mutch	✓		Senator Warner	✓	
Senator Nething	✓				
Senator Trenbeath, Chairman	✓				

Total (Yes) 5 No 0

Absent 1

Floor Assignment Senator Nething

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

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
February 16, 2005 3:48 p.m.

Module No: SR-31-3213
Carrier: Nothing
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2348: Transportation Committee (Sen. Trenbeath, Chairman) recommends DO PASS and BE REREFERRED to the Appropriations Committee (5 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2348 was rereferred to the Appropriations Committee.

2005 SENATE APPROPRIATIONS

SB 2348

2005 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 2348

Senate Appropriations Committee

☐ Conference Committee

Hearing Date February 17, 2005

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
11	1		670
Committee Clerk Signature <i>196</i>			

Minutes:

Chairman Holmberg opened the hearing on SB 2348.

Senator Dave Nething, District 12, presented testimony on SB 2348, reminding the Senate Appropriations Committee about the public transportation bill. He indicated there is nothing different in this bill then what was presented. It includes a \$1 increase in the registration and the funding it will raise is about the same as in the previous bill. As to new information, Congress has now taken a position in their bill and it will increase the rural transportation fund, match funds for the duration of the 6 year bill. This will make more funds available for the match portion.

Questions were raised about the amount of the match and the ratios used on different programs.

The hearing on 2348 closed.

Senator Tallackson moved for a do pass. There was no second so the motion died.

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Senate Appropriations Committee

Bill/Resolution Number 2348

Hearing Date February 17, 2005

Senator Christmann moved for a do pass with no recommendation. Senator Bowman seconded.

Senator Robinson indicated we really do need this bill.

A roll call vote was taken with 13 yes, 2 no and 0 absent. The motion for a pass with no recommendation carried.

Chairman Holmberg closed the vote.

Date 2/17/05
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2005 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB

Senate SENATE APPROPRIATIONS Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number 2348

Action Taken no Recommendation

Motion Made By Christmann Seconded By Bowman

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
CHAIRMAN HOLMBERG	✓		SENATOR KRAUTER		✓
VICE CHAIRMAN BOWMAN	✓		SENATOR LINDAAS	✓	
VICE CHAIRMAN GRINDBERG	✓		SENATOR MATHERN		✓
SENATOR ANDRIST	✓		SENATOR ROBINSON	✓	
SENATOR CHRISTMANN	✓		SEN. TALLACKSON	✓	
SENATOR FISCHER					
	✓				
SENATOR KILZER	✓				
SENATOR KRINGSTAD	✓				
SENATOR SCHOBINGER	✓				
SENATOR THANE	✓				

Total (Yes) 13 No 2

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Nothing

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

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
February 17, 2005 10:39 a.m.

Module No: SR-32-3326
Carrier: Nething
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2348: Appropriations Committee (Sen. Holmberg, Chairman) recommends BE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION (13 YEAS, 2 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2348 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2005 HOUSE TRANSPORTATION

SB 2348


2005 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL NO. SB 2348

House Transportation Committee

☐ Conference Committee

Hearing Date March 4, 2005

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1		X	12.1-52.5
2	X		0-4.9
Committee Clerk Signature 			

Minutes:

Chairman Weisz opened the hearing on SB2348 A Bill for an Act to amend and reenact sections 39-04.2-03 and 39-04.2-04 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to funding of public transportation.

Senator Nething: I have sponsored this bill for those people who rely on this kind of opportunity for transportation. We have a house bill that also encompasses this subject. I appreciate your earlier indication and concerns for public transportation. It increases the motor vehicle registration fees from \$2 to \$3. Your bill removes section 1 that relates to the language on the funding notice. That is how I thought this was a change we wanted to make. There are people here the represent that various public transportation and agencies. Their big concern is the dollars for the matching program and why they have that concern.

Bruce Furness: (See attached testimony #1)

Carol Wright:(18.0) (See attached testimony #2)

Rep. Thorpe (24.5) I think I have listened to the same presentation in 1999. When I went back to Minot at that time it was going to be for expansion of services etc. Anyway as soon as it passed they all of a sudden had a whole new fleet of buses so that kinda upset me just a little. I understand the need for new equipment, but I was a little over sold.

Carol Wright:(25.8) If this money comes through and we have it, someone from Jamestown might think we all of a sudden got several new vehicles too. If two new vehicles show up in my parking lot it would be because they were replacing vehicles that had over 200,000 on them and should have been replaced a long time ago. So maybe that was just a perception there was just maybe they finally had the opportunity to get new vehicles and replacement equipment. I can tell you many of the dollars that did come did go for expansion. We have allot of small, rural communities and have allot of people that need to get from one place to another. As our communities tend to loose some of their services people do need to go else where for doctors and other services to some of the larger communities and it is important that they have those opportunities as well.

Rep. Thorpe(27.1) Is this the only funding source? There must be allot of federal dollars or are federal dollars getting more scarce now?

Carol Wright:We get 5311, which are federal dollars that comes to the state to provide public transportation for agencies such as mine. We need to match those dollars 80%-20% matching. We also receive mill levy money and that money needs to go to provide all our services. I am a multa service provider so I provide transportation services, home delivered meals, congregate meals and outreach services and those mill levy dollars have to be split up among all those services to provide match. We are not close to the money we need to provide the match that we

are getting so we are constantly be fund raising to try and come up with the difference to be able to provide the services that we do.

Rep. Owens(28.7) This 5311 is 80-20 matching. Is that from the FDA?

Carol Wright: It is Federal Transit Administration dollars that come into the state the fund public transportation and it is 80-20.

Rep. Owens: And you have a mill levy for certain things and then this.

Rep. Ruby Your route, are they mostly rural are allot of them around town. You put on 200,000 miles, it sounds like allot when you are in town, but highway miles you can put them on fast.

Carol Wright: There are different project miles. If I speak for my project alone, we have had to eliminate almost all our rural routes due to funding. So my miles are almost exclusively in the city of Jamestown and two square miles of it.

Rep. Ruby The fiscal note doesn't show money going to the counties. According to the bill it talks about each county shall receive \$18,300.

Chairman Weisz The DOT takes the money and they send it back out under the formula that is identified in the bill so any dollar comes in 100% has to go out. It shows the expenditures from the DOT of 1 ½ million, but the fiscal notes don't necessarily that but the expenses going out. Everyone has a multa county agreement.

Carol Wright: There may not be a headquarters in every county, but the public transportation is in all counties.

Rep. Ruby Each county has an allocation that comes to it.

Rep. Schmidt(32.5) In my area where people are disabled and both people have diabetes. They take them to dialysis and the bus won't wait for them all day. Would more money help this situation?

Carol Wright: It becomes more and more difficult all the time to provide specialist transit need requests when your dollars start shrinking. Our employees are really dedicated to their people and trying to provide all services that they can. When money is limited you have to make tough choices and that means you can't be everything to all people. More money just helps to keep everything going and do a better job of meeting the increasing needs to the older population.

Rep. Delmore Part of this problem is the increasing aging population and especially in rural areas where there aren't a lot of people available when everyone is working too.

Rep. Meyer The whole town is 70 plus so public transportation becomes even more important.

Robin Werre: Bis-Man Transit in Bismarck(36.0) I would like to go beyond what Carol told you. Bismarck, Fargo & Grand Forks receives our funding from FTA under sections 53-07 and 53-09 which is again our capital purchases, facilities and vehicles is an 80-20 match, but on our operations it is a 50-50 match. So everything we receive from the federal government we have to match 50% to keep our vehicles going. That is our vehicles, fuel and drivers and all of that. It is more involved than just the 80-20. In Bismarck we just started up six routes this last year and trying to put together a fleet of vehicles we have been able to receive some discretionary money from the FDA. It is still 80-20 so when you are buying a bus that cost \$250,000 a bus you still have to come up with the 20% of that so it is quite a lot of money at one time. It takes us several years to put that fleet of vehicles together. Right now we are using some of our smaller vehicles which are still \$50,000 each. They don't last as long as one of our buses that is built to be out on

the streets longer. We provided over 190,000 rides. We provide to both elderly and disabled so we offer 24 hr a day service. On our new PAC system, which is just getting started, we are currently up to almost 7,000 rides a month and we are told that is very good for a new system and people getting use to it.

Rep. Meyer Treed transit means just picking up with a phone call.

Robin Werre: Yes, just picking up by a phone call. It is a door to door service. Our people call the day before and reserve the bus.

Rep. Meyer Yes, fixed transit is our route and it cost \$1 to go anywhere you want to go. Elderly people are charged less.

Leon Dietrich: (See attached testimony #3)

Chairman Weisz(42.0) Anyone here in opposition.

Hearing closed 42.1

Chairman Weisz reopened hearing on SB2348 (43.2) Anyone want to hold it over? Everyone comfortable with it?

Rep. Vigesaa(43.6) The \$2 is currently being collected. Is that coming out of the registration?

Chairman Weisz It is an additional \$2 than what we currently pay. \$2 is part of the registration fee. It doesn't come out of highway funds per say.

Rep. Iverson I would like to see how 1468 does. If that passed there would be extra fees on the registration.

Chairman Weisz (46.7) I think that bill will probably pass. If my bill passes we will work that out in conference committee. We will reconcile the difference. If my bill fails this bill would fail then there is no vehicle to use.

Rep. Hawken (47.5) This is a different issue. We are here to set policy and over the years the policy we have set is that we do care about having public transportation for the citizens of ND. We are not even able to begin to do what we should be doing because of money concerns because of the number of people that we have in the state. With the population continuing to age the needs are only going to increase. I feel very strongly for making sure we at least do the minimum we can do. Fargo puts in at least \$600,000 of tax money every year. This helps them cover their costs for public transportation. Even with this increase we don't come close to covering the costs here. I don't know how we cannot look at this and do this. This is a \$1 we are talking about. I am really happy to donate a \$1 to help someone else.

Chairman Weisz Number one issue when they did a survey with households was transportation. I think there is a correlation that you will get it back in the end by keeping people in their homes. There is no way to say if we spend this million and a half we will get five million back.

Rep. Meyer (51.9) In our area the huge impact is in meals on wheels. We have elderly people that don't eat because they don't get to the grocery stores. They don't get sick if they are fed. It really makes a difference when someone shows up with hot meals. (52.5)

Tape 2, Side A

Rep. Owens (0.0) This gives them 4.6 million from that fund, based on the 1.5. I would like a little opportunity to work on this. The minute he said conference committee, we still can go back there.

Motion Made By Rep. Delmore Seconded By Rep. Hawken

DO PASS 11 Yes 0 No 4 Absent Carrier: Rep. Hawken Re-referred to Approp. (.4)

Date: 3-4-05
Roll Call Vote #:

2005 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 5B2348

House Transportation Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Do Pass

Motion Made By Rep. Delmore Seconded By Rep. Hawken

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Rep. Weisz - Chairman	✓		Rep. Delmore	✓	
Rep. Hawken - Vice Chair.	✓		Rep. Meyer	✓	
Rep. Bernstein	✓		Rep. Schmidt	✓	
Rep. Dosch	absent		Rep. Thorpe	✓	
Rep. Iverson	✓				
Rep. Kelsch	✓				
Rep. Owens	✓				
Rep. Price	absent				
Rep. Ruby	absent				
Rep. Vigasaa	✓				
Rep. Weiler	absent				

Total (Yes) 11 No 0

Absent 4

Floor Assignment Rep. Hawken

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

Re-referred to approp.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
March 4, 2005 3:03 p.m.

Module No: HR-40-4216
Carrier: Hawken
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2348: Transportation Committee (Rep. Welsz, Chairman) recommends DO PASS and BE REREFERRED to the Appropriations Committee (11 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 4 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2348 was rereferred to the Appropriations Committee.

2005 HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS

SB 2348

2005 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB 2348

House Appropriations Committee
Government Operations Division

☐ Conference Committee

Hearing Date Monday, March 14, 2005

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	X		24.0-end
1		X	00-8.0
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Drew W. Tankhead</i>			

Minutes:

Chairman Carlisle opened the Hearing on SB 2348 concerning the funding of public transportation. **Senator David Nething, Jamestown, District 12**, testified in support of SB 2348. He told the Committee that the legislation increased the registration fee for public transportation funding from \$2.00 to \$3.00. It modifies the formula at the same ratio. Note the following changes: on lines 22-23, p. 1, 12,000 is changed to 18,000; 200 to 300; and \$1.00 to \$1.50. He gave two reasons for the changes:

- Public transportation is increasing in North Dakota, particularly for seniors and those unable to pay for other transportation
- With increased usage, there is also a need for more matching dollars. In many communities the mill levy match is being diverted to have enough money for transportation programs. There are fewer dollars for other senior programs.

This is one way to take the pressure off the funding with the mill levy match.

Chairman Carlisle noted the fee hasn't been changed for years. **Sen. Nothing** said last time it changed from a dollar to two dollars. This time is smaller percent increase. **Chairman Carlisle** said that the fee comes off motor vehicle registration. **Sen. Nothing** said yes.

(Meter #27.5)

Mr. Paul Grindeland, Transit Director, Fargo Senior Services, read his testimony in support of SB 2348 into the record (See Handout #1).

Rep. Timm asked Mr. Grindeland what he charges his passengers. **Mr. Grindeland** said they set a suggested contribution, i.e. in Steele County, it's \$6.00 and that bus goes from Traill County to Fargo and back. **Rep. Timm** asked how this legislation will affect the fees he charges. **Mr.**

Grindeland said there are never any plans to lower fees. He pointed out that people who can't afford, don't have to contribute. No one is denied a ride based on the ability to pay it. **Rep.**

Timm asked Mr. Grindeland if he was around when they raised the fees from \$1.00 to \$2.00.

Mr. Grindeland said yes. **Rep. Timm** asked what the transit authority did with the extra money.

Mr. Grindeland said they increased routes and started to consolidate in the region. This increased trips and towns that are served. Drivers got increased wages, slightly above minimum wage. **Rep. Timm** asked if this funding allows him to buy new equipment. **Mr. Grindeland** said public funds raised by the \$2 surcharge on registrations allows them to match federal funding.

Federal or 5311 funding is a 50/50 match. **Chairman Carlisle** added it's all about service, providing trips to doctors, etc. **Mr. Grindeland** said the majority of the trips are for medical

runs. There are lots of runs to regional centers like Valley City. **Chairman Carlisle** asked about

the authority and **Mr. Grindeland** said the Fargo Senior Commission contracts with the Department of Transportation.

Rep. Timm asked when the last fee was increased. **Mr. Grindeland** said 1999. It started at \$1.00 and went to \$2.00. **Rep. Timm** asked when the \$1.00 fee started. **Mr. Grindeland** said 1989.

(Meter #35.5)

Rep. Robin Weisz, District 14, testified in favor of SB 2348. He said he sponsored the legislation in 1999 and he supports this increase of \$2.00 to \$3.00. The main reason is because transportation has become critical to human services. At a recent meeting with human services agencies, a survey was discussed. One of the questions was why services for home and community-based care weren't being accessed. The number one reason was transportation. Expanding home and community-based care to reduce costs and to keep people out of nursing homes means there has to be a transportation system. Twenty or thirty years ago when children stayed close to home, this wasn't such a problem. But, things have shifted and an increase here will help on the other end with regard to human services issues. The Transportation Committee sent it out the way the Senate sent it over and it received a strong vote. **Chairman Carlisle** asked if there was any opposition. **Rep. Weisz** said it's a net zero for the Department of Transportation. There is some resistance to raising fees, but that's the mechanism put in place in 1989. It's a question of how to match federal funds for these programs.

Chairman Carlisle welcomed the students from St. Mary's.

Mr. Rick Thoms, Executive Director of Souris Basin Transportation, Minot, ND, submitted his testimony in support of SB 2348 for the record (See Handout #2). He referred the Committee

to "Great News for Transportation!" on the last page of the Handout #2. The House passed the TEA-LU transportation authorization 417-9, and there's a 60% increase in rural transit funding, which comes down to about \$1 million extra which will have to be matched 50/50. He said the bill also allows the capital assisting grant to be rolled over into the operating. If a company is short of operating funds, it can take from the capital and put it in operating. The capital assist on the federal grants is 80/20 split, but when it's moved to operating, it reverts to 50/50.

Mr. Thoms said the feds have held back fiscal year 03, 04, & 05. It's assumed Denver is holding back because of this federal highway bill. Once that bill is passed, "money is going to flow into North Dakota like gang busters." He estimates around \$10 million dollars, just in capital. That's one of the things the transit authority does with state aid--it matches those federal dollars that come in.

Mr. Thoms referred to Rep. Timm's earlier question regarding how the transit authority used increases. He told the Committee that Souris Basin expanded routes and took over the route from Crosby to Minot. He referred Committee members to the news article about their service in Rugby from the Tribune which is attached to his testimony (See H#2).

Rep. Timm asked about the \$1 million dollars which will become available and whether or not that's statewide. **Mr. Thoms** said that's coming into the state, the DOT, and they will distribute according to formula. **Rep. Timm** asked to confirm that it's \$10 million for capital projects. **Mr. Thoms** said that's the estimate, because it's about \$3.9 million per year over three years. **Rep. Timm** asked if capital projects is for new equipment and **Mr. Thoms** said yes. **Rep. Timm** wanted to know if the state participates in buying new equipment. **Mr. Thoms** said it's all

federal funding except for the match from the state aid fund. **Rep. Timm** asked if they use part of that to purchase new equipment and **Mr. Thoms** said yes.

Ms. Robin Werre, Director of Bis-Man Transit, read her testimony in support of SB 2348 into the record (See Handout #3).

Rep. Timm asked if there were another system which provides service to the rural areas. **Dir.**

Werre said West River Transportation provides for rural counties around Bismarck. **Rep. Timm** asked if Mr. Thoms' operates in Minot. **Dir. Werre** said Mr. Thom's system does the rural in the Minot area. **Mr. Thoms** said the Minot Commission on Aging picks up within the city.

(Meter #54.2)

Mr. John Willer, resident from Bismarck, read his testimony into the record (See Handout #4).

(Tape 1, Side B)

Mr. Jim Gilmore, Director of Planning and Development, City of Fargo, which includes the Transit Division, provided testimony from **Mayor Bruce W. Furness, Fargo**, in support of SB 2348 (See Handout #5). He told the Committee that the city of Fargo benefits from these funds. The city has 9 fixed routes and 7 para-transit buses that run each day providing service for the elderly and the disabled. There are an additional 3 fixed route buses when NDSU is in session. More people are using the transit system because it's difficult to find parking downtown Fargo and on campus. Funds are needed to keep growing, to keep pace with city growth. Previous funding has allowed this to happen as well. Like Bismarck, there are federal resources available for transit, and while the city provides about \$600,000 in general fund to help match, the transit system can certainly use additional state money.

Rep. Timm asked about fees. **Dir. Gilmore** said the fixed route bus is \$1.00 and it's discounted to 50 cents for elderly or disabled persons. Para-transit is \$2.00 a ride. **Rep. Timm** asked about funding. **Dir. Gilmore** said it's partly from the general fund and fare boxes. \$600,000 goes toward capital acquisition and operating. The federal transit provides a little over \$1 million a year towards capital and operating. He said they also have a contract with the city of West Fargo. They contribute \$110,000 per year to provide service through the Joint Powers Agreement. There is an agreement with Moorhead, too. To users, it's one system.

Chairman Carlisle asked **Dir. Werre** about the cap in the Bismarck system. **Dir. Werre** said the cap for para-transit is \$1.50 and \$1.50 for the bus. **Chairman Carlisle** asked about Minot. **Mr. Thoms** said the para-transit is \$2.00 and the city bus is \$1.00.

Ms. Connie Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota League of Cities, submitted testimony in support of SB 2348 from **Mayor Brown, City of Grand Forks** (See Handout #6). She told the Committee that the League Legislative Committee supports additional funding for transportation. (Meter #4.9)

Mr. Tim Horner, Director, Office of Transportation Program, North Dakota Department of Transportation, in answer to **Chairman Carlisle's** question regarding funds, said that these funds would pass through the DOT.

Rep. Timm asked if the federal funding has increased since the program started in 1989. **Dir. Horner** said there was federal funding back then as well and it has increased significantly. Both bills that are going through the U.S. House and Senate now are increasing revenues significantly in the rural areas. He suspects they'll be in conference in May, so the outcome is unknown, but

there's momentum for an increase in distribution of transit funds to areas like North Dakota, South Dakota, and the Midwest. The current highway bill is 18 months in delay.

Rep. Kroeber asked if statewide systems have been close to matching federal dollars or not. **Dir.**

Horner said that's a local issue and local authorities have matched in the past. They've utilized their funds. **Ms. Werre** said "we make application. It isn't the state's department match...transit funds. Rural people, they match and work with the state. Fargo, Grand Forks, and Bismarck are small urban. We work directly with Denver..."

Rep. Kroeber asked Ms. Werre if they are close to being able to match the federal funds. **Ms.**

Werre said she has been able to match everything that has been available federally. With the increase, that may be different.

Rep. Timm moved a Do Pass SB 2348; **Rep. Kroeber** seconded.

Hearing no further discussion, **Chairman Carlisle** called for Roll Call Vote #1. Motion passed, 5-0-1.

Chairman Carlisle thanked those who testified and closed the hearing on SB 2348.

(Meter #8.0)

2005 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB2348
Funding for Public Transportation

House Appropriations Full Committee

☐ Conference Committee

Hearing Date March 15, 2005

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1		X	#5.1 - #12.3
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Chris Alexander</i>			

Minutes:

Rep. Ken Svedjan, Chairman opened the discussion on SB2348.

Rep. Mike Timm, Vice Chairman explained that this bill will raise the car registration fee from \$2.00 to \$3.00 which is \$1.5 million raised for public transportation. The state highway department disperses this money to all public transportation agencies throughout the state.

Rep. Mike Timm, Vice Chairman moved a Do Pass motion for SB2348

Rep. Ron Carlisle seconded

Rep. Ken Svedjan, Chairman asked what this registration fee is based on currently

Rep. Mike Timm, Vice Chairman answered that registration is based on the age and the weight of the car.

Rep. Ole Aarsvold asked how the match by the county is determined

Rep. Mike Timm, Vice Chairman answered that it is a dollar for dollar match made up of county funds and bake sales and auctions.

Rep. Ken Svedjan, Chairman asked if this match was for cities as well as counties.

Rep. Mike Timm, Vice Chairman answered yes

Rep. Ken Svedjan, Chairman clarified that if this bill passes, the budget for the Department of Transportation will need to be amended.

Rep. Jeff Delzer commented that there was no county match in this bill and said that this bill matches the federal dollars. The senior mill levy match goes for transportation as well. (meter Tape #1, side B, #10.5)

Rep. Ken Svedjan, Chairman clarified that the fiscal note explains that this \$1.00 increase will raise \$1.55 million, and asked what the match was on the federal side

Rep. Mike Timm, Vice Chairman answered that this match is for equipment. They have to apply for federal funds on their own, the state does not do this.

Rep. Francis J. Wald read lines 22-24 which says that the counties must match \$1.50 per capita to receive these dollars.

Rep. Mike Timm, Vice Chairman commented that this was correct and that they raise funds through levies and bake sales

Rep. Ken Svedjan, Chairman called for a roll call vote on the Do Pass motion for SB2348.

Motion carried with a vote of 17 yeas, 4 nays and 2 absences. Rep Hawken will carry the bill to the house floor.

Rep. Ken Svedjan, Chairman closed the discussion on SB2348.

Date: 3/14/05
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2005 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NOSB2348

House House Appropriations Government Operations Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken DO PASS SB 2348

Motion Made By Rep. Timm Seconded By Rep. Kroeber

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Carlisle	✓		Rep. Kroeber	✓	
Rep. Timm	✓		Rep. Williams	✓	
Rep. Kempenich					
Rep. Thoreson	✓				

Total (Yes) 5 No 0

Absent 1

Floor Assignment Rep. Timm to Full Comm
It passes on of Full, Rep. Hawkins

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

Date: March 15, 2005
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2005 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB2348

House Appropriations - Full Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken DO PASS

Motion Made By Rep. Timm Seconded By Rep. Carlisle

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Rep. Ken Svedjan, Chairman	X		Rep. Bob Skarphol		X
Rep. Mike Timm, Vice Chairman	X		Rep. David Monson	X	
Rep. Bob Martinson	X		Rep. Eliot Glassheim	X	
Rep. Tom Brusegaard	AB		Rep. Jeff Delzer		X
Rep. Earl Rennerfeldt	X		Rep. Chet Pollert	X	
Rep. Francis J. Wald	X		Rep. Larry Bellew		X
Rep. Ole Aarsvold	X		Rep. Alon C. Wieland	X	
Rep. Pam Guleson	AB		Rep. James Kerzman	X	
Rep. Ron Carlisle	X		Rep. Ralph Metcalf	X	
Rep. Keith Kempenich	X				
Rep. Blair Thoreson	X				
Rep. Joe Kroeber	X				
Rep. Clark Williams	X				
Rep. Al Carlson		X			

Total Yes 17 No 4

Absent 2

Floor Assignment Rep. Hawken

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent: GO DO PASS 5-0-1 Timm
(House floor - Rep. Hawken)

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
March 15, 2005 12:43 p.m.

Module No: HR-47-4989
Carrier: Hawken
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2348: Appropriations Committee (Rep. Svedjan, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS**
(17 YEAS, 4 NAYS, 2 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2348 was placed on the
Fourteenth order on the calendar.

2005 TESTIMONY

SB 2348

Testimony Presented on Senate Bill 2348 to the

Senate Transportation Committee
Senator Thomas L. Trenbeath, Chair

by Mike Williams , Fargo City Commissioner

February 3, 2005

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am Mike Williams, a member of the City Commission of the City of Fargo. The City of Fargo respectfully requests a "Do Pass" recommendation for Senate Bill #2348.

Public transportation is an essential public service in North Dakota, to both urban and rural areas. It is becoming even more important as our elderly population increases.

Many North Dakotans rely upon public transportation for their basic necessities, such as medical services, shopping, etc. It enables people to live independently in their homes longer, thus decreasing the need for costly nursing homes or limited care facilities. This further helps to provide a sense of independence and dignity to our elderly and disabled residents.

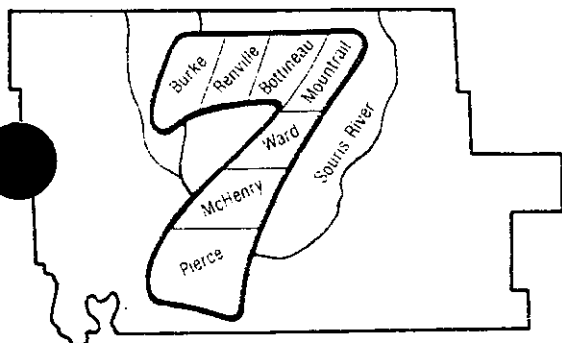
Transit is important to working people and refugees who don't have a car. It provides a way to get to work, to shop, and to reach medical services. For some households transit saves them money by eliminating a need for a second car. It also reduces the need for parking facilities in the downtown and near NDSU.

Public transportation is primarily supported by tax payers through public funding from the federal, state, and local governments. Both rural and urban systems are challenged to meet the needs of their citizens with limited resources.

The additional transit revenue will go to political subdivisions and non-profit organizations that provide public transportation. It will provide money needed to match Federal Transit Administration funding and provide for operations of transit systems. Higher fuel prices and other rising costs have increased the cost of providing public transportation, and additional state money is needed to pay for these costs. In addition, as Fargo has grows there will be a need for additional transit service.

Passage of this bill would provide Fargo with additional funds for public transit. This will help us to continue to provide essential transportation services to the citizens of Fargo. Our rural systems are equally important, where transportation options are more limited and adequate funding is even more critical. Regardless of whether they live in an urban or rural area, all citizens of North Dakota would benefit greatly by passage of this bill.

I encourage you to give SB 2348 a "do pass" recommendation.



Souris Basin Transportation Board

P.O. BOX 2211 • MINOT, ND 58702 • (701) 852-8008

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Operating and Coordinating a Rural Public
Transportation System in a Seven County Area.

*same
to House
app-prating*

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Rick Thoms, Executive Director of Souris Basin Transportation in Minot, ND. Souris Basin Transportation is a rural public transportation system that covers eight counties encompassing over 11,000 square miles.

During the last decade, North Dakota has awakened to the realities of it's aging population. Transportation, mobility and access are areas that deserve increased attention as more of us are living longer lives. The number of people over 60 has grown nearly four times as fast as the number under 60 years old. Obviously, every aspect of daily life in North Dakota has started to respond to the growing number of the elderly. People have come to realize that trends in the aging of the population will effect their lives, communities and society.

Transportation is the catalyst necessary to access the many services and opportunities that help to define the quality of life in our complex society. The purpose of the transportation systems (rural and urban) in North Dakota, is to provide dependable, accessible and affordable transportation for the elderly, handicapped, low-income and general public.

Because of the changing social and economic conditions in the state, services that were once available in small rural communities, such as medical, food and retailing, have moved to the larger cities. This shift has created a greater demand for increased transportation services each year. but meanwhile, the cost of providing these services continues to rise. Our citizens in the rural communities have become increasingly dependent on the rural transportation systems for their transportation to needed medical, social and commercial services.

With the federal highway bill being stalled in Washington, DC, we have had to operate on a budget that is two years old, back when fuel was \$1.15 a gallon. Now that same gallon of fuel costs \$ 2.00. When your fleet uses over 16,000 gallons of fuel a year, the costs add up along with the other increases in labor, maintenance and natural gas.

Not only have our costs gone up, but the demand for services has increased this year. I have seen a 10% increase in our ridership in the last six months. We are taking young mothers and their children to day-care and then to work. We are taking small rural business people to Minot and then they switch to other modes of transportation to the bigger cities and return them to their rural business. Transit is good for business. Transportation provides the vital mobility and access to jobs that is needed and continues to grow. If people of North Dakota are to achieve greater personal independence and economic well being, our state transportation strategy should recognize the importance of continued Public investment in public transit by the passing of SB 2348.

The 109th Congress will begin considering and debating the reauthorization of TEA 21 Highway bill. Right now it is on a continuing resolution till May 31, 2005. It is not clear just how quickly Congress will get this legislation onto the House and Senate calendars. In the last congress sessions, the purposed Highway bill for FTA Section 5311 for North Dakota transit ranged from \$2 million on the House side and \$3 million in the Senate. If either version would have passed, it would have more than doubled the amount North Dakota recieved last year. (\$1.1 million)

As of Wednesday, the House is about two weeks away from having a new bill. We understand that it will likely be a little higher than last years. The Senate, is arguing over the total number, but I think it's safe to say that it will come in higher than the house. Yesterday I received a E-Mail stating the the Administration had agree to an overall reauthorization figure much higher than expected, which is good for all of us.

No matter what the final outcome of the reauthorization dollars are, the transit providers must still meet the match requirements for these new funds and that is where State Aid for Public Transit comes in to help us meet these match requirements.

please support us in our effort of suppling these needed services by passing SB 2348. The success in providing transportation services to meet the needs of all, has made a difference in the lives of many,

Six-Year Highway & Transit Funding Legislation Introduced In U.S. House; \$283.9 Billion In Guaranteed Funding For All 50 States

Washington, D.C. - A six-year highway and transit funding bill that would guarantee \$283.9 billion through 2009 was officially introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives today.

The bipartisan legislation (H.R. 3) - "The Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy For Users" (TEA LU) - was introduced by:

- Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska), Chairman, Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
- Rep. James L. Oberstar (D-MN), Ranking Democrat, Transportation Committee
- Rep. Tom Petri (R-WI), Chairman, Highways, Transit & Pipelines Subcommittee
- Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Ranking Democrat, Highways & Transit Subcommittee

Click [here](#) for more information.

"On Monday, President Bush introduced his Fiscal Year 2006 Budget," Chairman Don Young said. "I was pleased that the budget includes an updated reauthorization proposal funding Federal highway, transit, and highway safety programs at \$283.9 billion over six years in guaranteed funding. This is a \$28 billion increase above the proposal introduced by the Administration two years ago, and I applaud the Administration's recognition of the pressing needs of America's highways and transit systems in this higher number.

"The bill we are introducing also funds the same programs at \$283.9 billion in guaranteed funding over six years, 2004 through 2009. I strongly believe that we have a much better chance of moving this legislation quickly in the 109th Congress, now that we are working with the same top line funding level that the President has endorsed.

"The other reason that this \$283.9 billion guaranteed funding level may sound familiar is that it was the total six-year guaranteed funding level that we almost agreed to in last year's conference negotiations. I am committed to getting back to conference as fast as possible," Young said.

"The reauthorization of TEA 21 is now more than a year overdue," said Ranking Democrat James Oberstar. "Last year, we were unable to reach consensus between our Committee, the leadership of the House, the Administration and the other body. We cannot afford to put this action off any longer. We need to move this bill quickly and get it through conference by the end of May, when the current authorization extension expires.

"I applaud Chairman Young for his leadership in producing this legislation and getting the process started in the 109th Congress," Oberstar said.

"I'm quite pleased to have this bill moving forward," Subcommittee Chairman Tom Petri said. "We clearly need to get the process going. To remain competitive, our nation needs a first-class transportation system suitable for the 21st Century, and this bill is a step in the right direction."

"This bill will provide real projects to meet real needs and create real jobs," said Subcommittee Ranking Democrat Peter DeFazio. "It will fund millions of critical highway, bridge and transportation projects across the United States, putting millions to work, maintaining and improving our critical transportation infrastructure."

Executive Summary

Public Transportation Ridership Has Increased 21 Percent Since 1996

From 1996 to 2002, public transit ridership grew 21 percent, and now carries 9.6 billion passenger trips a year. But in many U.S. cities, public transportation infrastructure is not keeping up with demand. Public transportation provides vital mobility to seniors, individuals with disabilities, and families with only one car or no car – but in 40 percent of U.S. counties, there is no public transportation system.

Highway congestion is a growing problem in nearly every part of the country. If public transportation was unavailable and people were forced to drive, congestion on our nation's highways would be worse than it is today.

To help address these problems, TEA LU increases funding to meet public transportation infrastructure needs. The DOT Conditions & Performance report shows that 36 percent of the nation's urban rail vehicles and maintenance facilities and 29 percent of the nation's bus fleet and maintenance facilities are in substandard or poor condition.

The legislation provides \$52.35 billion for transit programs, all guaranteed. This is a 51 percent increase in guaranteed funding. TEA 21 authorized \$41 billion for transit programs, of which \$36 billion was guaranteed funding.

The bill also increases the percentage of formula funding for public transportation in rural areas (towns of less than 50,000 population). Total six-year funding for rural public transportation increases by 60 percent, going from \$1.25 billion in TEA 21 to \$2 billion in TEA LU.

The legislation strengthens public transportation services for individuals with disabilities and authorizes President Bush's "New Freedom Initiative", which provides funds for new disabled transportation activities in areas where they are not available, or that go beyond the requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Souris Basin Transportation

Lexi Vetsch (left) and Rylee Kuntz take the Souris Basin Transportation bus to and from story hour at the Heart of America Library on Wednesdays. The pair are part of a group of several children who attend the Growing Place Daycare and also utilize the busing service for rides around town. Driver Den Kuehnemund looks on.

Staff photo



All aboard

*Local residents
utilize Souris Basin
Transportation*

By Sonia Mullally
Tribune Writer

Souris Basin Transportation's theme is "Take a Ride With Us."

The familiar white and maroon bus has been offering rides in Rugby for more than 20 years.

While many of the riders who utilize the system are senior citizens or the disabled, there are also many who use the transportation for going back and forth to work, school and other activities.

"For the first year or two the bus

was offered just for senior citizens, but since then we've been trying to get the word out that everyone can ride," said Den Kuehnemund, driver.

Rugby resident Carol Spencer has ridden the bus to and from work for the past six years.

"I used to walk to work before I found out about the bus," Spencer said. "But it was difficult in the winter or when I had to work nights. I really value this bus. I'd be lost without it."

The Growing Place Daycare chil-

dren utilize the bus for a ride to and from story hour on Wednesdays at the Heart of America Library as well as to and from T-ball at the recreation complex during the summer.

"We are very lucky to have the service," Sandy Ley, daycare director, said. "They drive right up to the door, and the kids step onto a warm bus in the winter. It's great for the kids, the staff and the parents."

Ley also said that she and her

See Bus, Page 7



Rugby resident Carol Spencer rides the Souris Basin Transportation bus to and from work. She's been doing so for six years and said she'd be lost without the service. She used to walk to work before finding out about the bus service.

Staff photo

staff appreciate how patient the bus drivers are with the children.

"They don't rush us," she said. "They wait for us to get our seat belts on. The kids just love the ride and the bus drivers, too."

Local drivers are Kuehnemund and Ray Norsby. In Rugby, someone in need of a ride would call 776-5750. The call rings to the bus where the driver on duty takes the call and arranges a pickup. Reservations for rides can also be made in advance.

According to Kuehnemund, a majority of the pickups are for wheelchair-bound passengers or those in need of a ride to a medical appointment or grocery store. Frequent stops include the clinic and pharmacy, but the bus will take anyone wherever they want to go within the city.

There are routes offered outside the city limits, from Rugby to Balta, for instance. However, Kuehnemund said they rarely, if ever, make the trip because of the cost of driving the bus that distance. The only way he would likely take the bus out to the rural area would be for a larger group of riders from a central pickup point.

The bus is available in the city of Rugby from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. every weekday except for Thursdays, when the route goes to

Minot. Suggested fare for a round trip in town is \$2. A ride to Minot and back, though, is slightly higher, at \$6. Donations in excess of the standard fare are also welcome. Passengers 60 years of age and above will not be denied service because they are unable to contribute to the cost of the service. Escorts ride free.

About Souris Basin Transportation

According to the service's web site, www.sourisbasin-transit.com, Souris Basin Transportation (SBT) was organized because existing public transportation in the region was either inadequate or non-existent in most rural areas.

SBT, based in Minot, is a non-profit corporation that operates a rural public transportation system covering 10,462 square miles in a seven-county area of north central North Dakota. The transportation system is open to the general public but caters to the elderly and people with special needs.

The transportation system utilizes 12 buses equipped with wheelchair lifts and two vans. These vehicles provide transportation to hundreds of people each month on a demand response (Dial-A-Ride) or a deviated route type schedule. SBT operates 14 different routes at present.

Routes are offered in

Pierce, Bottineau, Burke, McHenry, Mountrail, Renville and Ward counties (including the air force base), as well as the city of Powers Lake, from Crosby to Minot and from Bowbells to Williston.

Rick Thoms

From: "Chris Zeilinger" <zeilinger@ctaa.org>
To: "CTAA Board" <board@ctaa.org>; "CTAA Delegates" <delegates@ctaa.org>
Cc: <dcstaff@ctaa.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 10, 2005 11:12 PM
Subject: CTAA Capitol Clips – 3/10

CTAA Capitol Clips

March 10, 2005

GREAT NEWS FOR TRANSPORTATION!

On a resounding 417-9 vote, the House of Representatives has passed its \$284 billion "TEA-LU" transportation authorization. This bill would guarantee \$52.3 billion to public transit programs. It features record levels of funding for both rural and urban areas' transit programs, and promises to do more for integrating public transportation with the network of medical and social services.

In case you were following the movement of this bill through the House, the Rules Committee and House leadership worked hard to ensure that the transit portion of this bill sailed to quick passage with no departure from the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's recommendations.

Action now turns to the Senate, where the Environment and Public Works Committee will draft its highway recommendations on March 16, and the Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee expects to draft its transit recommendations on March 17.

—
Chris Zeilinger
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—
CTAA's "Capitol Clips" is an electronic news and information service for our association's State Delegates, members of our Board of Directors, and other community transportation stakeholders. All recipients are encouraged to share its contents with CTAA members and transit advocates in their states and regions. It is published on an almost-weekly basis to report on news and events in and around our federal government that affect the community transportation network. Preparation and dissemination of this news is supported, in part, through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. However, none of the opinions, analysis or conclusions herein reflect any statement or policy of the United States Government.

—

**Testimony Before The
Senate Transportation Committee**

Thursday, February 3, 2005

Chairman Trenbeath and members of the Transportation Committee, my name is Carol Wright. I am Director of James River Transit which operates in Stutsman County and Wells/Sheridan Transit located in Harvey. I am here representing Dakota Transit Association and the 33 public transportation agencies located throughout North Dakota. I am speaking in support of Senate Bill 2348. Public transportation is an essential service for many citizens across our State. Senate Bill 2348 would provide additional State Aid for Public Transportation funding which would benefit all 33 Public Transportation Providers.

We have experienced a marked rise in our costs of operation. In 2004, my agency experienced a 15% increase in the costs of fuel to operate our buses, while Fargo who operates on a much larger scale had an increase in fuel costs of approximately 25% on their fixed route and a 22% increase for their paratransit service. Other costs have increased as well. Each year as our bus fleet grows older, it requires more maintenance and repair costs. From 2003 to 2004, James River Transit experienced a 26% increase in maintenance/repair costs. This scenario is repeated across the state. The issues of purchasing tires; doing more preventative maintenance; paying for increased insurance costs for vehicles and staff; trying to keep pace with driver wages (many of whom make only \$7.00/hour); meeting drug and alcohol testing requirements; etc., all contribute to a need for additional funding.

Increased funding is also needed to cover the local match money required for the acquisition of new vehicles available under federal funding. While many of us are operating buses that are eligible for retirement, we are not able to come up with the required 20% match, and have to forfeit the opportunity to upgrade our fleets. James River was granted federal money for 2004-2005 to get a replacement vehicle for a 1991 bus with 248,781 miles. We are unable to meet the match requirements and have had to pass on this go-around of vehicle procurements. Of the 9 vehicles in our

fleet, only 3 have less than 144,000 miles. Dickinson is also considering applying for an additional vehicle but is having difficulty with finding the money for match.

In addition to assisting with increasing expenses and match for replacement vehicles, the funding provided in SB 2348 would allow Public Transportation Providers the opportunity to address gaps in current service delivery and expand their services. Specific examples of this include:

- Kenmare Wheels & Meals has had repeated requests to expand their hours of service. Additional funding could allow them to expand from the current 9am – 2pm Monday through Friday schedule to include service until 4:00pm and add some evening hours.
- Reduction in the length of time rural passengers must ride in order to access larger communities. Fargo Senior Services coordinates transit for 7 counties. Some individuals spend a 10-hour day to access transportation to a larger community for medical appointments or expanded shopping opportunities. With increased funding, more buses could be added to rural areas so the round trip would not have to cover such a large territory.
- Increased funding could help prevent increases in passenger fares to cover the additional costs providers are currently experiencing.
- Fargo City Transit has hourly service on its 6 evening routes. Expanded revenues would allow them to operate on the same 30-minute schedule they offer during the day. The need and requests are there for this expansion, but the funding is not currently available to meet the demand.
- James River Transit, as well as many other rural providers, does not do an adequate job of serving the rural communities in our county. We have had to eliminate much of the provision of transit between small towns and Jamestown due to a lack of adequate funding to provide the more costly service. Williston has experienced the same dilemma. They would like to expand services by offering transit between Watford City and Keene, as well as from Grenora, Alamo, Wildrose, Ray and Tioga to Minot once per month. An increase in the Public Transportation funding would allow us to serve the most rural parts of our State more effectively.

- Our Transportation Projects are routinely asked to add night and weekend hours of operation so that people who do not have access to their own transportation can participate in the community activities that the rest of us take for granted. Our entire State could use more service days and additional routes to better serve our disabled, our senior citizens, and the general public.

The need for Public Transportation services continues to escalate. As a whole, the public transportation agencies throughout the State gave 99,903 more rides in 2004 than in 2003. Twenty-nine individual Public Transportation Providers experienced growth in the number of passengers and the demand for their services. In particular, there is a growth in the number of passengers in wheelchairs. The number of individuals who depend on paratransit services continues to rise. These rides are often the most costly because of the added vehicle operating expense and the amount of time it takes to provide each ride.

We need your help in increasing funding for State Aid for Public Transportation. Senate Bill 2348 will provide needed resources for our Public Transportation Providers to cover rising operational costs, replace aging buses, and increase service to areas currently underserved.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY SB 2348
SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
HONORABLE THOMAS L. TRENBEATH, CHAIRMAN
FEBRUARY 3, 2005 10:00 A.M.

Good morning Chairman Trenbeath and members of the Senate Transportation Committee. My name is Leon Dietrich and I live in Central Bismarck, District 32. I work as a custodian for Bismarck Public Schools at Solheim Elementary, in South Bismarck.

I am a transit user. I urge you to increase funding for transit so we don't lose it and more people can use it.

I need transit to get back and forth to work. Sometimes I use transit to go to meetings as well.

Sometimes I take the CAT system to go to Gateway Mall to go shopping or walking.

Transit in Bismarck works well for me. I hope this extra funding helps people in small towns to get the transit they need.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Senate Bill No. 2348
Senate Transportation Committee
Statement of Support from the City of Grand Forks
February 3, 2005

- Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Transportation Committee, my name is Todd Feland and I am the Public Works Director for the City of Grand Forks. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Mayor Michael R. Brown in support of Senate Bill No. 2348.
- The City of Grand Forks (City) provides several public transportation services, including City Bus, Senior Rider, and Dial-A-Ride (paratransit) services.
- Public transportation services are paid for through a variety of revenue sources, including federal, state, city, and fares. Even with the variety of revenue sources provided to fund public transportation services, service demand often exceeds the ability to fund public transportation service needs.
- Public transportation services are especially critical to seniors and disabled persons who are often on fixed incomes and rely on the services as their only means of transportation.
- Senate Bill No. 2348 provides an increase in the motor vehicle registration fee from \$2.00 to \$3.00, which is dedicated to the public transportation fund.
- Senate Bill No. 2348 will have a direct, positive impact on public transportation services in Grand Forks through assisting the City match funds from other sources and funding critical public transportation service needs in the City.
- I ask for your favorable consideration of Senate Bill 2348 and request a DO PASS recommendation from the Senate Transportation Committee.

CHAPTER 39-04.2 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

39-04.2-01. Definitions. In this chapter, unless the context or subject matter otherwise requires:

1. "Public transportation" means the vehicular transportation of persons from place to place within this state, but does not include the provision of transportation facilities otherwise provided by public funds, such as roads, streets, highways, bridges, lighting equipment, or signs.
2. "Ridership" means a one-way trip provided to any one person in a motorized vehicle designed to carry eight or more persons in an enclosed area with separate seating for each person.
3. "Transportation provider" means a political subdivision or any nonprofit corporation that provides transportation to the public, especially to elderly and handicapped citizens.

39-04.2-02. Public transportation fund - Administration of the fund. The director shall administer the public transportation fund. Payments disbursed under this chapter must be paid from moneys deposited in the fund. The expenses arising from administration of the fund must be paid from the fund within the limits of legislative appropriations.

39-04.2-03. Additional registration fee - Deposit in fund. At the time of registering a motor vehicle subject to registration under section 39-04-19, the owner shall pay to the director in addition to the registration fee a fee of two dollars for each motor vehicle registered. The fee must be deposited with the state treasurer, who shall credit the fee to the public transportation fund.

39-04.2-04. Distribution of funds.

1. Moneys appropriated by the legislative assembly to the public transportation fund must be disbursed under guidelines issued by the director. The funds must be used by transportation providers to establish and maintain public transportation, especially for the elderly and handicapped, and may be used to contract to provide public transportation, as matching funds to procure money from other sources for public transportation and for other expenditures authorized by the director.
2. Following authorization of the director, the state treasurer shall pay the public transportation funds to transportation providers in each county. Each county shall receive twelve thousand two hundred dollars plus one dollar per capita of population in the county, based upon the latest regular or special official federal census. Each year the director shall increase or decrease the one dollar per capita amount in order to distribute all funds appropriated for the biennium. If there are multiple transportation providers in one county, then the base amount of twelve thousand two hundred dollars must be divided equally among the providers and the additional per capita amount must be based upon the percentage of elderly and handicapped ridership provided by each transportation provider within the county.
3. Unless otherwise provided by law, any moneys remaining in the fund at the end of each biennium must be retained in the public transportation fund for redistribution.

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Testimony Presented on Senate Bill 2348 to the

House Transportation Committee
Representative Robin Weisz, Chair

by Bruce W. Furness, Mayor
City of Fargo

March 4, 2005

*Same Given
to House
appropriates*

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

The City of Fargo respectfully requests a "Do Pass" recommendation for Senate Bill #2348. Public transportation is an essential public service in North Dakota, to both urban and rural areas. It is becoming increasingly more important as our elderly population increases. Many North Dakotans rely upon public transportation for their basic necessities, such as medical services, shopping, etc. It enables people to live independently in ^{their} ~~there~~ homes longer, thus decreasing the need for costly nursing homes or limited care facilities. This further helps to provide a sense of independence and dignity to our elderly and disabled.

Transit is important to working people and refugees who don't have a car. It provides a way to get to work, to shop, and to reach medical services. Other benefits of transit include allowing households to save money by eliminating a need for a second car and a reduction in the need for parking in the downtown and near NDSU.

In 2004, the City of Fargo operated nine fixed route buses six days a week, and three additional fixed route buses on days that NDSU was in session. In addition, paratransit buses provide service to individuals that are not able to use the fixed route

bus system because of a handicap or disability. The transit system provided for over 700,000 rides on the fixed route buses, and over 29,000 on the paratransit system.

Public transportation is supported with public funding from the Federal, State, and local governments. Fargo relies on State funding to match federal grants. The additional money is needed to pay for increased costs, provide local match for Federal Capital Grants, and provide money to expand the system as the City grows.

Passage of this bill would provide Fargo with additional money to provide essential transportation services to the citizens of Fargo and West Fargo. Our rural systems are equally important, where transportation options are more limited and adequate funding is even more critical. Regardless of whether they live in an urban or rural area, all citizens of North Dakota would benefit greatly by passage of this bill.

I encourage you to give SB 2348 a "do pass" recommendation.

#2

**Testimony Before The
House Transportation Committee
Friday - March 4, 2005**

Chairman Weisz and members of the Transportation Committee, my name is Carol Wright. I am Director of James River Transit which operates in Stutsman County and all public transit for Wells and Sheridan Counties operated out of Harvey. I am here representing Dakota Transit Association and the 33 public transportation agencies located throughout North Dakota. I am speaking in support of Senate Bill 2348. Public transportation is an essential service for many citizens across our State. Senate Bill 2348 would provide additional State Aid for Public Transportation funding which would benefit all 33 Public Transportation Providers.

We have experienced a marked rise in our costs of operation. In 2004, my agency experienced a 15% increase in the costs of fuel to operate our buses, while Fargo who operates on a much larger scale had an increase in fuel costs of approximately 25% on their fixed route and a 22% increase for their paratransit service. Other costs have increased as well. Each year as our bus fleet grows older, it requires more maintenance and repair costs. From 2003 to 2004, James River Transit experienced a 26% increase in maintenance/repair costs. This scenario is repeated across the state. The issues of purchasing tires; doing more preventative maintenance; paying for increased insurance costs for vehicles and staff; trying to keep pace with driver wages (many of whom make only \$7.00/hour); meeting drug and alcohol testing requirements; etc., all contribute to a need for additional funding.

Increased funding is also needed to cover the local match money required for the acquisition of new vehicles available under federal funding. While many of us are operating buses that are eligible for retirement, we are not able to come up with the required 20% match, and have to forfeit the opportunity to upgrade our fleets. James River was granted federal money for 2004-2005 to get a replacement vehicle for a 1991 bus with 248,781 miles. We are unable to meet the match requirements and have had to pass on this go-around of vehicle procurements. Of the 9 vehicles in our

fleet, only 3 have less than 144,000 miles. Dickinson is also considering applying for an additional vehicle but is having difficulty with finding the money for match. State Aid for Public Transit provides us with funds to meet these match requirements.

In addition to assisting with increasing expenses and match for replacement vehicles, the funding provided in SB 2348 would allow Public Transportation Providers the opportunity to address gaps in current service delivery and expand their services. Specific examples of this include:

- Kenmare Wheels & Meals has had repeated requests to expand their hours of service. Additional funding could allow them to expand from the current 9am – 2pm Monday through Friday schedule to include service until 4:00pm and add some evening hours.
- Reduction in the length of time rural passengers must ride in order to access larger communities. Fargo Senior Services coordinates transit for 7 counties. Some individuals spend a 10-hour day to access transportation to a larger community for medical appointments or expanded shopping opportunities. With increased funding, more buses could be added to rural areas so the round trip would not have to cover such a large territory.
- Increased funding could help prevent increases in passenger fares to cover the additional costs providers are currently experiencing.
- Fargo City Transit has hourly service on its 6 evening routes. Expanded revenues would allow them to operate on the same 30-minute schedule they offer during the day. The need and requests are there for this expansion, but the funding is not currently available to meet the demand.
- James River Transit, as well as many other rural providers, does not do an adequate job of serving the rural communities in our county. We have had to eliminate much of the provision of transit between small towns and Jamestown due to a lack of adequate funding to provide the more costly service. Williston has experienced the same dilemma. They would like to expand services by offering transit between Watford City and Keene, as well as from Grenora, Alamo, Wildrose, Ray and Tioga to Minot once per month. An increase in the Public Transportation funding would allow us to serve the most rural parts of our State more effectively.

- Our Transportation Projects are routinely asked to add night and weekend hours of operation so that people who do not have access to their own transportation can participate in the community activities that the rest of us take for granted. Our entire State could use more service days and additional routes to better serve our disabled, our senior citizens, and the general public.

The need for Public Transportation services continues to escalate. As a whole, the public transportation agencies throughout the State gave 99,903 more rides in 2004 than in 2003. Twenty-nine individual Public Transportation Providers experienced growth in the number of passengers and the demand for their services. In particular, there is a growth in the number of passengers in wheelchairs. The number of individuals who depend on paratransit services continues to rise. These rides are often the most costly because of the added vehicle operating expense and the amount of time it takes to provide each ride.

We need your help in increasing funding for State Aid for Public Transportation. Senate Bill 2348 will provide needed resources for our Public Transportation Providers to cover rising operational costs, replace aging buses, match federal transit operating dollars that come into the state, and increase service to areas currently underserved. Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

SB 2348
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
MARCH 4, 2005 - 10:00 A.M.

Good morning Chairman Weisz and members of the House Transportation Committee. My name is Leon Dietrich and I live in Central Bismarck, District 32. I work as a custodian for Bismarck Public Schools at Solheim Elementary, in South Bismarck.

I am a transit user. I urge you to increase funding for transit so we don't lose it and more people can use it.

I need transit to get back and forth to work. Sometimes I use transit to go to meetings as well.

Sometimes I take the CAT system to go to Gateway Mall to go shopping or walking.

Transit in Bismarck works well for me. I hope this extra funding helps people in small towns to get the transit they need.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Testimony Before The
Government Operations Division of the
House Appropriations Committee
March 14th, 2005**

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SB 2348

Chairman Carlisle and members of the Committee, my name is Paul Grindeland. I am the Transit Director of Fargo Senior Services. Our agency coordinates transportation services for a seven county area in southeastern North Dakota. I am here to speak in support of Senate Bill 2348.

The State Aid for Public Transportation Fund was established by the North Dakota Legislature in 1989 to provide funding for the operation of public transit systems throughout the state. The appropriation to this fund was increased in 1999. The increase we are talking about today would help us to meet the growing expenses connected with operating this public transportation program. For example our agency vehicles use approximately 29,000 gallons of fuel each year. The increase in the cost of both diesel and regular fuel in the past sixteen months has upped our fuel expenditures by \$15,000 per year.

Also, an increase in the Transit Funding will allow us to serve the most rural parts of our territory much more effectively. Region wide we have numerous requests for expanded service but right now we are unable to expand because of budget constraints. In Cass County for example, we are currently working with three agencies: Fargo Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments, the Small Urban and Rural Transportation Center, and the Community of Care of rural Cass County to plan for future expansion of our services to the most frail and socially isolated individuals

in the county. The additional funding in this bill would help us put expansion plans into effect right away.

Our entire operating area could use more service days and additional routes to better serve our seniors and the general public. Right now a bus trip into Fargo or Grand Forks, can be a ten hour day for some people riding our system. We would like to shorten the length of these trips for the comfort of our most frail passengers. In addition, we are also working on plans to bring people to more local cities for shopping, medical, and employment needs with possible destinations such as Oakes, Wahpeton, Lisbon, and Valley City as our budget permits

In closing I compliment the Department of Transportation and its staff for its handling of this Public Transportation Fund and thank them for their assistance over the years with our transit program. Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Testimony Before The

House Subcommittee Governmental Operations of House
Appropriations

Monday, March 14, 2005

Chairman Carlisle and members of the Governmental Operations Committee, my name is Robin Werre. I am the Director of Bis-Man Transit here in Bismarck and Mandan. I am speaking in support of Senate Bill 2348. Public transportation is an essential service for many citizens of North Dakota. Senate bill 2348 would provide additional State Aid for Public Transportation funding which would allow Public Transportation Providers with matching funding.

In Bismarck and Mandan we provide demand response/door to door service for elderly 60 years of age or older or to certified disabled individuals. We provide service 24 hrs per day and 7 days per week. During 2004 we gave over 190,000 one way rides. In May of 2004 we started a new fixed route system in Bismarck and Mandan with 6 routes and 6 alternate routes, currently we are giving over 300 rides per day M/F, with limited routes on Saturday and no service on Sunday or major holidays.

During 2004 with 27 vehicles we drove over 710,000 miles, with fuel costs at an average of \$1.92 per gal. Currently fuel is costing us \$2.18 per gal. for a total of about 9000 gallons per month for transit vehicles only. This is a 26 cent increase or about \$28,000 per year increase in fuel. In putting together the new fixed route system we have had to purchase larger bus's that cost over \$250,000, whereas our smaller bus's for demand response cost about \$63,000.

As a small urban provider we are able to receive funding from FTA under two sections. Section 5307 is our regular appropriations in which we have to match funds for operation on a 50/50 match and capital funds on a 80/20 match. Other funding that has been received over the last few years is 5309 funds, which are discretionary funds requested by our federal delegation. 5309 funds are used for larger capital projects and need to be matched at an 80/20 ratio. Funding for an agency such as ours is normally with 1/3 farebox income, 1/3 federal funds and 1/3 local and state funds for matching. With a budget of just over 2 million dollars currently we need to have

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matching funds of \$670,000 This does not include funds to purchase equipment such as bus's or any technology equipment

With the passage of the new Highway Bill on the federal level we anticipate an increase in federal funds available to providers. But to access those dollars we need to have the local dollars to match the federal dollars. In just our Bis-Man Transit we have approximately 1 million dollars available to us currently if we can provide the match.

As providers we do not see our costs going down, gas is going up, other operating expenses are going up, people are demanding more service and our funds just will not stretch far enough. Therefor Senate Bill 2348 will provide some of the needed matching funds for Public Transportation Providers.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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Senate Bill 2348
House Appropriates/Government Operations
March 14, 2005

Chairman Carlisle and Members of the House Appropriations
Government Operations Sub-Committee:

My name is John Willer and I live in an apartment in north Bismarck. The Bis/Man Transit and CAT bus are very important to me because I don't have any other transportation to get around. I use the Transit and bus to go grocery shopping, go to Parks and Recreation activities and medical appointments.

I used to have to ride my bike in the winter to get where I had to go and I didn't even like it. It would be very cold and sometimes I would hit ice and fall. If I didn't ride my bike I had to walk or stay home. Now I can ride the CAT bus or if I know ahead of time where I want to go I can call Transit. The bus does not cost a lot to ride so I can afford to go more often.

I have a lot of friends who use the Transit and CAT buses too. I am sure they like riding the bus or using Transit because it gives them more freedom to go where they want to go. People who drive cars don't have to worry about how to get around. My friends and I don't drive so without the transit or the bus we have to stay home and get bored. You should all ride the CAT bus so you can see what it is like. I like the bus because they go by my house and it is much warmer than riding my bike.

Please pass this bill so we get more funds for the Transit and the bus to keep them running. We really need to keep them running so people who don't drive can get work, buy groceries, get to the doctor and have fun sometimes.

I would like to thank you for letting me testify. If you have any questions I will try to answer them.

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Senate Bill No. 2348
House Appropriations – Government Operations Division
Representative Ron Carlisle, Chair
Statement of Support from the City of Grand Forks
March 14, 2005

Mr. Chairman and members of the Government Operations Division of the House Appropriations Committee, my name is Todd Feland and I am the Public Works Director for the City of Grand Forks. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Mayor Michael R. Brown in support of Senate Bill No. 2348.

The City of Grand Forks (City) provides several public transportation services, including City Bus, Senior Rider, and Dial-A-Ride (paratransit) services. These services are especially critical to seniors and disabled persons who are often on fixed incomes and rely on the services as their only means of transportation.

These services are paid for through a variety of revenue sources, including federal, state, and city funding, as well as user fares. However, service demand often exceeds the ability to fund public transportation service needs, even with this variety of revenue sources.

Senate Bill No. 2348 provides an increase in the motor vehicle registration fee from \$2.00 to \$3.00, which is dedicated to the public transportation fund.

Senate Bill No. 2348 will have a direct, positive impact on public transportation services in Grand Forks through assisting the City match funds from other sources and funding critical public transportation service needs in the City.

I ask for your favorable consideration of Senate Bill 2348 and strongly request a DO PASS recommendation. Thank you.