

My name is Marilyn Gregoire, I'm from Grand Forks County, within the 4 mile ET Zone outside of Grand Forks. I testified at the Fargo meeting in January, so I don't intend to duplicate those comments, but to add to them. The best summary I can offer is to read to you a "Letter to the Editor" I just sent to the Grand Forks Herald. The last letter I sent them wasn't published, so I have doubts this one will be either. The Grand Forks Herald is hand in glove with the City on this and other issues. If you would permit me, I'd like to air my concerns in this forum. Consider yourselves in each of these two positions.

Grand Forks Herald
Letter to the Editor
June 1, 2008

The Right to Vote

Are you a citizen of Grand Forks? You have an opportunity to vote for or against various politicians who have affected your life through taxes, policies, decisions.

Or, are you a Grand Forks County citizen who lives within 4 miles of the Grand Forks city limits? Like me, you'll be voting for County Commissioners, instead of members of the City Council. But, when push comes to shove, the County Commissioners can't help you avoid having nuisance uses of the land outside of Grand Forks, since the City Council has taken over the zoning and changed it to suit their needs. That is, a new landfill. And all this without paying for Development Rights. At its current growth rate, the city won't be using the space outside the city for 100 years at the very soonest. But city leaders, who toss phrases like 'Good Neighbor Policy' around, are assuming our development rights without paying a penny.

Citizens of Grand Forks, you have a right to vote. Are you going to use your right or waste it? Are you going to vote for the same names you did last time because they're familiar? Have you been watching to see what they've done with the power you've entrusted to them? I've been watching your City Council and I'm not impressed. I wish I had a right to vote—to affect the outcome of an election by using my voice—my vote. But, they have muffled that. And this is America?

Marilyn Gregoire
Secretary
Grand Forks County Citizens' Coalition

This Coalition currently is involved in a lawsuit against the City of Grand Forks in regards to the ET Zoning. It is also working to get the word out to legislators in the upcoming months. We want to see a bill developed that draws back the reigns on these unruly rulers. I propose the Extra Territorial Zoning law be repealed and a joint governing board be set up to give townships the lead on making decisions outside city limits, not the minority vote, but the lead.

We know what's good for the land; we've been good stewards for generations. We know what's best for our neighborhoods. We're an independent lot here in North Dakota. Ask anyone who was there during the blizzards of '96 and '97. How we kept everyone warm during the power outage that lasted a week, then graciously accepted strangers into our homes as Grand Forks was evacuated for the Flood of 1997. We have a good neighbor policy, we live it day to day.

Once a bill is ready, and as I understand it, having endured your Commission's scrutiny twice, it could be sent forth to the Legislature. I propose there be a deadline placed on this bill so that it can be reviewed by the Senate and the House and, God

willing, signed into law by the end of January, 2009. This is to offset the timeline the City of Grand Forks is under to get their landfill permit issued by the Department of Health in February 2009. We need to steamroll this since it was the Legislature who caused the problem in the first place.

I've heard many say there's too much politics involved in this issue. That it's hard to put the toothpaste back in the tube. We as North Dakota voters trust, as we go about our day to day of being good workers, raising good families, being good neighbors, we trust that the politicking here in Bismarck is just and fair. It's part of the North Dakota Nice—we are a trusting, independent lot. When politicians were voted into their positions, some of you have those positions, we gave more than our vote, we gave our trust.

Roll it back, all the way back. Zoning issues need only consider corridors outside of the city limits of any city in North Dakota. Then, city officials should be a minority on committees working out details of those corridors.

Just because we live in the country doesn't make us county bumpkins.