

**Testimony To The
ADVISORY COMMISSION ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS
Prepared October 27, 2009 by the
North Dakota Association of Counties
Terry Traynor, Assistant Director**

CONCERNING POSSIBLE STUDY TOPICS

Chairman Potter and members of the Advisory Commission, thank you for the opportunity to present several possible study topics for your consideration.

At the request of Commission member Amundson, the NDACo Board of Directors was asked, prior to its August meeting, to consider likely topics for future ACIR study and bring them for presentation and discussion at that meeting. I am here today to present the results of that discussion.

It should be noted that the NDACo Board of Directors is composed of county commissioners representing the eight regions of the State as well as other officials representing the county auditors, treasurers, recorders, clerks of district court, state's attorneys, sheriffs, county superintendents of schools, social service directors, former county judges, directors of tax equalization and the highway superintendents and engineers – a rather broad and diverse representation.

The following listing contains the study topics proposed. I have tried to combine and categorize like suggestions to make the list more manageable. I want to be clear that this listing is not to suggest that our Association or even individual county officials necessarily support the concepts proposed. Individual board members do however feel they are issues worthy of possible study and the Association of Counties board of directors as a whole asked that they be presented to the ACIR for consideration.

- Social service financing – reducing property tax burden
 - Increasing state support of specific mandated services
 - Transfer of administration & funding to the State,

➤ Infrastructure

- State highway design safety (i.e. increased use of pull-off lanes),
- Systematic infrastructure restoration and sustained transportation funding,
- Impact funding for such things as pipelines and wind farms – energy impact funding for infrastructure throughout the State

➤ Local government structure

- Consolidation of services within and among government entities
- City/county consolidations,
- Appointment of traditionally elected county officials,
- District attorney structure for prosecution with various county attorney options for civil representation,

➤ Government costs and revenues

- Health insurance costs and benefits through PERS,
- Requirements for funding of legislative mandates on local government,
- Simplification of oil & gas tax revenue administration,
- Dedicated funding source for ambulance service in rural areas,

➤ State Government Organization

- FEMA/DES operation and possible improvements,
- Use of local elementary and more regionalized high schools – greater local control

➤ Property tax – tax treatment of concentrated animal feeding operations,