

Sixty-first
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

HOUSE BILL NO.

Introduced by

Representative Wrangham

1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact sections 61-06-09, 61-06-10, 61-06-11, 61-06-13,
2 61-06-14, 61-06-15, and 61-06-16 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to allowing the
3 board of directors of an irrigation district to hold mail ballot elections.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 61-06-09 of the North Dakota Century Code is
6 amended and reenacted as follows:

7 **61-06-09. Regular election of irrigation districts - Mail ballot elections.** The regular
8 election of irrigation districts ~~shall~~ must be held on the second Tuesday in February in each
9 even-numbered year. The board of directors of an irrigation district may hold a regular or
10 special election by mail ballot. If the board determines to hold an election by mail ballot, the
11 board shall notify the electors of the district that the election will be held by mail ballot and that
12 no polling places will be open for the election.

13 **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Section 61-06-10 of the North Dakota Century Code is
14 amended and reenacted as follows:

15 **61-06-10. Notice of election after district is organized - Contents - Form.** Within
16 thirty-five days of, but at least twenty-five days prior to, any regular or special election held in an
17 irrigation district, the secretary of the board of directors shall publish a notice of the election in
18 the newspaper or newspapers of general circulation where the district is located and in the
19 official newspaper of each county in which the district is located. The notice must specify the
20 matters to be voted upon; and if the election is to be held by mail ballot or specify the location of
21 the polling place or places the location of the polling place or places; and the time of their
22 opening and closing. The notice must be in substantially the following form:

23 Notice is given that on _____, _____, an election will be held at
24 _____ ~~(here designate the polling place)~~ for the purpose of electing _____

1 members of the board of directors and for the purpose of voting upon the questions
2 submitted by the directors of the district. (The election will be held by mail ballot) or (the
3 election will be held at _____.) Polls will be opened at one p.m. and will be
4 closed at five p.m. of that day. Notice is further given that any elector desiring to have
5 the elector's name appear on the ballot must file a request in writing with the secretary
6 of the district not less than twenty days before the election.

7 **SECTION 3. AMENDMENT.** Section 61-06-11 of the North Dakota Century Code is
8 amended and reenacted as follows:

9 **61-06-11. Board of election of irrigation district - Failure of member of election**
10 **board to be present.** Prior to the date of the regular election, the board shall appoint from the
11 electors of the district one clerk and two judges who shall constitute the board of election. If the
12 board shall fail to appoint such board of election, or if the members appointed do not attend at
13 the opening of the mail ballots or the opening of the polls on the day of election, the electors of
14 the district present at that hour may appoint the members of the election board or fill the place
15 of an absent member thereof. The board of directors, in its order or resolution appointing the
16 members of the board of election, shall designate the time and place where the mail ballots will
17 be opened or the election shall be held.

18 **SECTION 4. AMENDMENT.** Section 61-06-13 of the North Dakota Century Code is
19 amended and reenacted as follows:

20 **61-06-13. Ballot at irrigation district elections - Contents- Mail ballots.**

21 1. At least fifteen days before an election in an irrigation district, the secretary shall
22 prepare and have typewritten, mimeographed, or printed an official ballot
23 containing the names of all candidates which have been filed with the secretary.

24 The ballot shall:

- 25 ~~1-~~ a. Be headed "Official Ballot";
- 26 ~~2-~~ b. Contain all names thus filed;
- 27 ~~3-~~ c. Show the name of the district;
- 28 ~~4-~~ d. State the number of persons to be voted for;
- 29 ~~5-~~ e. Have blank spaces below for writing in other names; and
- 30 ~~6-~~ f. State any question or resolution submitted to the electors by the board of
31 directors.

- 1 2. The provisions of this chapter shall not prevent any person desiring to be a
2 candidate at such election and who has failed to file as provided in this chapter,
3 from furnishing stickers to be attached to the ballot by the electors. Such stickers
4 shall not be over one-half inch [1.27 centimeters] in width and shall have printed
5 thereon one name only. ~~Any~~
- 6 3. If the election is not held by mail ballot any elector who will be absent from the
7 irrigation district on the day of the election may vote an absent voter's ballot at that
8 election. The secretary shall provide the official ballot to any elector who makes
9 application for an absent voter's ballot, and the absent voter must submit the
10 absent voter's ballot to the secretary of the district, along with an affidavit that the
11 ballot submitted represents the elector's vote at the election, on or before the day
12 of the election. An absent voter's ballot must be the official ballot, and the ballot
13 and affidavit must be actually delivered to the secretary or the election board
14 before the polls close on election day. The secretary shall submit any absent
15 voters' ballots to the election board on the day of the district election.
- 16 4. If the board of directors of the irrigation district determines to hold the election by
17 mail ballot, the secretary of the board of directors shall mail an official mail ballot
18 with a return identification envelope and instructions sufficient to describe the
19 voting process to each elector on the fifteenth day before the election. The voting
20 instructions must contain a statement informing the elector that the elector is
21 entitled to complete the mail ballot in secrecy. The secretary shall mail the mail
22 ballot by first class mail, addressed to the address of the elector, and placed in an
23 envelope that is prominently marked "Due Not Forward". The return identification
24 envelope must include a form for the elector to certify that the individual is a
25 qualified elector and contain the elector's signature.
- 26 5. An elector entitled to cast more than one vote must be provided separate ballots
27 and return envelopes for each vote to which the elector is entitled.
- 28 6. An elector may obtain a replacement ballot if a mail ballot is destroyed, spoiled,
29 lost, or not received by the elector by signing a sworn statement that the ballot was
30 destroyed, spoiled, lost, or not received and delivering the statement to the
31 secretary of the district no later than four p.m. on the day before the election.

1 7. An elector voting by mail ballot must either deliver the mail ballot to the secretary of
2 the district before five p.m. on the day of the election or mail the ballot which must
3 be postmarked no later than the day before the election.

4 **SECTION 5. AMENDMENT.** Section 61-06-14 of the North Dakota Century Code is
5 amended and reenacted as follows:

6 **61-06-14. Oath required of members of election board - Chairman of election**
7 **board to administer.** Before opening the polls at an irrigation district election or opening mail
8 ballots, each member of the election board shall take and subscribe the following oath or
9 affirmation:

10 I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will perform my duties as judge or clerk (as the
11 case may be) according to law and to the best of my ability.

12 Such oath or affirmation may be administered by any director of the district or any officer
13 authorized to administer oaths. The board of directors shall designate one of the judges as
14 chairman of the election board and the chairman of the election board shall have the authority
15 to administer and certify all oaths or affirmations taken by other members of the election board
16 and shall administer and certify all oaths or affirmations required during the progress of the
17 election.

18 **SECTION 6. AMENDMENT.** Section 61-06-15 of the North Dakota Century Code is
19 amended and reenacted as follows:

20 **61-06-15. Opening and closing hours of polls at irrigation district elections.** ~~The~~
21 If the election is not held by mail ballot, the polls shall be open at one p.m. of the election day
22 and shall be kept open until five p.m. of the same day.

23 **SECTION 7. AMENDMENT.** Section 61-06-16 of the North Dakota Century Code is
24 amended and reenacted as follows:

25 **61-06-16. Canvass of ballots after closing polls - Delivery of materials to**
26 **directors.** Immediately after ~~the polls are closed~~ five p.m. on the day of the election, the
27 election board publicly shall open and proceed to canvass the ballots cast and shall declare the
28 result of such canvass. A mail ballot may be counted only if the ballot is returned in the return
29 identification envelope and is signed by the elector. The chairman shall wrap securely all lists,
30 tally sheets, oaths and affirmations, and other documents relating to the progress of the election
31 and shall deliver the same to the secretary of the board of directors of the district.