

2011 HOUSE AGRICULTURE

HCR 3027

2011 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

House Agriculture Committee
Peace Garden Room, State Capitol

HCR 3027
February 10, 2011
Job #14323

☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature



Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A resolution of no confidence in the NRCS's state conservationist and urging the United States Department of Agriculture's NRCS to continue the cooperative agreement process at a \$10,000 funding level; allow continuation of local decision making, and to allow a coordinator with a regional council to maintain that collocation.

Minutes:

Representative Schmidt Co-Sponsor: (pamphlet #1)

I have two Resource Conservation and Development councils in my area. I have been an NRCS employee for 33 years. In those 33 years, I was an RC&D coordinator. I was the RC&D program manager in Alaska for nine years and in North Dakota for four years. I now sit on the Dakota Prairies RC&D representing Morton County Commissioners. I was recently elected to be the State RC&D Association President. In that capacity I follow the direction of that association. We also have a regional association that covers about 13 states. There is also a national RC&D Association. In 2007 the NRCS received a national award for its cooperation with the RC&D program from the national RC&D president. There are eight RC&D councils in the State of ND. One of the values of me standing here is to inform you of this program and its value to the people. This is a federal program led by the local people. They receive a federal employee. As an RC&D council, they have the day to day direction of a federal employee. Having been the supervisor of those employees for 14 years, it was difficult because I didn't have control of those individuals for day-to-day activities. RC&D Councils do. The eight councils mirror the regional councils. In some cases four of those councils are the same: Minot, Grafton, Williston, and Fargo. The other four are stand alone. What has occurred as that part of that locally-led process, the NRCS has entered into cooperative agreements with the RC&D councils. Those funds received, about \$10,000 over the last five or six years, were used by the council.

(See attached #3) The RC&D councils took \$45,000 and used it to support and stimulate other activities, about 73 on the sheet. They assisted over \$2 million worth of projects. They are all locally led and determined by the council themselves. The RC&D councils have the state association. Each council has two representatives on the state association. The NRCS has decided to not enter into cooperative agreements with the RC&D council as it has been done in the past. The councils did not receive any cooperative agreement funding last year. We had no opportunity to proceed with projects. Most projects are

community development projects like those on reservations. Where there are four RC&D councils collocated with regional councils, we were going to move those four coordinators.

Those are the three scenarios:

1. Cooperative agreements
2. Ability to use community development funds
3. Keep those four coordinators with those councils unless the NRCS and the council decided jointly to move them.

In July at a state association meeting, the NRCS laid groundwork to not include cooperative agreements. I've given a packet of letters (See letters #2) sent from RC&D councils to Mr. Sweeny, State Conservationist, asking him to reconsider and to put the cooperative agreement funds back in.

The State of Montana, South Dakota, and Minnesota all do these cooperative agreements today. Two of those states were copied after North Dakota. Each state gets the same amount of money. Those three states can support cooperative agreements. But in ND we cannot. After those letters were written, I had discussions with the national office and was given direction by the RC&D council presidents in a vote of 7-0 to proceed, produce, and develop the resolution in front of you. The one council not present was from Jamestown. The other seven voted unanimously. I've been in contact with the NRCS national office. This is from the answers they gave us. The RC&D association works from the direction of the council presidents. The council presidents may or may not be communicative with their RC&D council members. They are elected representing those councils.

There was an effort by Mr. Sweeney and NRCS to meet individually with each council. He has met with five different councils. Out of the five councils, four of them want to continue to push the resolution. He met last night with the people in Minot. Margo Helgersen is their president. She emailed me after the meeting. (See attached #4)

Even though we have tried to resolve these issues, there has been nothing concrete done other than words to the council presidents. The council in my area, Dakota Prairies RC&D, sent an email. It is from Deborah Vollmuth. (See attached #5)

I've been an NRCS employee for so long and know what the program is, it is a situation where it is myself against Mr. Sweeny. I have a letter from Doug Graupe in Williston. (See attached #2d) (Read from first paragraph).

I don't want to take an agency to this type of activity. We can't come up with concrete with written documentation that resolves the issues of those council presidents.

Representative Mueller: It sounds like discontent in the camp. Anyone have a sense of what the plan is of the State Conservationist?

Representative Schmidt: His original discussion with the RC&D Association was that he wanted a granting process. The RC&D councils would submit projects to him that he would review and determine whether or not to fund. They thought that was in conjunction with the cooperative agreements. We found out later in a letter, that he sent to all the councils, that

it was not. It was just the grants. It was taking the decision making from the local councils and putting it in the hands of the federal government. The council presidents felt that was usurping the grass roots effort for which this was established by Congress since 1968. There is some conflict within some of the councils. That conflict needs to be resolved between them and their presidents.

We do not have any cooperative agreements for this fiscal year. Other states do.

Representative Conklin: Is this all of your funding?

Representative Schmidt: No. The RC&Ds get funding from other places. It is local decision making with those dollars. That is difficult for the federal government to accept.

Helen Schatz, Past President of the State Organization of RC&Ds and Past President of Dakota Prairies:

I am in agreement with Representative Schmidt. We do a lot with a little. We are helping with the ambulances, no-till, animal waste systems, etc. We are all volunteers.

Dan Wogsland, Executive Director of ND Grain Growers Assn: We support this resolution. Orderly development in rural ND is a good idea.

Opposition: None

Chairman Johnson: Closed the hearing.

2011 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

House Agriculture Committee
Peace Garden Room, State Capitol

HCR 3027
February 11, 2011
Job #14448

☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature



Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

Committee Work

Minutes:

Representative Schmidt: Moved Do Pass HCR 3027.

Representative Rust: Seconded the motion

Representative Schmidt: I visited with some of you this morning about this resolution.

(Reads from email of Thomas Christianson, Washington, DC who is the Supervisor of NRCS State Conservationist):

At this stage it is very important I leave the resolution a specific partnership and programmatic issue as much as possible to the State Conservationist in partnership with the RC&D council leadership. Given your previous career with NRCS in multiple locations, I know you recognize the critical importance of avoiding top-down mandates or decisions from regional or national leadership. I desire win-win solutions that accomplish the mission of the RC&D program, keeping with our authorities and responsibilities and meet the needs of local RC&D councils to best of our abilities.

Another words he is not going to do anything. We are to deal with the State Conservationist on our own. This resolution is to bring notice. We need your help.

Representative Boe: That paragraph indicates to me that this resolution is going to hit File 13.

Representative Schmidt: Where it goes, the program RC&D councils are designated by the Secretary of Agriculture. Only the Secretary of Agriculture can designate an RC&D council. Only the Secretary of Agriculture can eliminate a council. That is where the authority lies. I was told last night that the chief of the NRCS has not been told of this resolution at all.

Representative Mueller: I think there are other issues that go beyond some of what we have heard. One of the concerns I had voiced in an email is that the resolution isn't

speaking for all of them. But I don't think the resolution says that you are speaking for all of the councils.

Representative Schmidt: No it doesn't. As president of the association, that is our role to speak for all the members as directed by them. The email you reference to is from a council member. I have an email from that council president. His name is Bob Curl.
(Reads from email)

Mr. Sweeney, our State Conservationist, has told us we can't use these support and stimulation funds for anything but soil and water conservation projects. You've seen the project list the other funds have been used for.

(Reads email from Bob Curl to Thomas Christianson, January 9, 2011)

Myself and the entire council are at our wits end not knowing what to do for funding in this new year. I would be thrilled to hear from your office as to what we might do to convince Mr. Sweeney that the system we are using works.

So while the resolution doesn't say it represents all of the councils, it is put forth from the association which does.

Representative Mueller: My position would be that it's better not coming from all of the councils. It isn't generated by the councils because not all are seeing it the same way you are. It is easier for me to support the resolution when it doesn't say all eight councils are talking about this.

Representative Schmidt: No it doesn't.

A Roll Call vote was taken. **Yes: 12, No: 0, Absent: 2,**
Representatives Kingsbury and Trottier)

DO PASS carries to be placed on the consent calendar.

Representative Schmidt will carry the bill.

Date: 2/11/11

Roll Call Vote # 1

2011 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HCR 3027

House **Agriculture** Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken: ☒ Do Pass ☐ Do Not Pass ☐ Amended

☐ Rerefer to Appropriations (Place on the Consent Calendar)

Motion Made By Representative Schmidt Seconded By Representative Rust

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Dennis Johnson, Chair	X		Tracy Boe	X	
Joyce Kingsbury, Vice Chair	AB		Tom Conklin	X	
Wesley Belter	X		Richard Holman	X	
Craig Headland	X		Phillip Mueller	X	
David Rust	X				
Mike Schatz	X				
Jim Schmidt	X				
Wayne Trottier	AB				
John Wall	X				
Dwight Wrangham	X				

Total **Yes** 12 **No** 0

Absent 2

Bill Carrier Representative Schmidt

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

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HCR 3027: Agriculture Committee (Rep. D. Johnson, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** and **BE PLACED ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR** (12 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HCR 3027 was placed on the Tenth order on the calendar.

2011 SENATE AGRICULTURE

HCR 3027

2011 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Senate Agriculture Committee
Roosevelt Park Room, State Capitol

HCR 3027
March 10, 2011
Job #15230

☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature

Greta Nelson

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

To allow a resource conservation and development coordinator collocated with a ND regional council to maintain that collocation.

Minutes:

Attachments: #1-2, #3, #4, #5, #6

Vice Chairperson Larsen; Meeting called to order on this 10th day of March, 2011 on HCR 3027 at 9:00 am. Clerk will take the roll call.

Clerk: 6-1 (Senator Flakoll absent)

James Schmidt: Rep Dist 31 and Sponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 3027 (Attachment #1 and #2)

Senator Murphy: Any word out of Washington DC that some of these funds cut back for the RCSis that a possibility?

Schmidt: The idea to start cooperative agreements moving it into contribution agreements was done long before the situation with congress as we have it today. You will see in the resolution there is a line relates to they will continue with cooperative agreements (line 14) including implementation the community development projects for as long congress funds the program. So if congress does not fund the program, it is a different issue. The idea to go to contribution agreements was long before we are in the fiscal agreement we are in now.

Senator Klein; We have seen many resolutions throughout the years, I see we are sending this off to Washington and people who should have a concern....with you letter from you agency, you people worked this out. Do you feel confident enough that you are making a bold enough statement?

Schmidt: I feel we could/should make a more bold statement. This resolution is going to the Secretary of Agriculture because he is the only individual who can designate or withdraw RC&D authorizations. We have taken a cooperative position.

Senator Klein; There are other issues that arise as it relates to this organization in the fact could potentially possibility as MN has a better way of presenting; whereas ND is hinder by our actions of these spokes....why are the rules different from state to state? That is why I am going with "bolder".

Schmidt: In RC&D receives its dollars programmatically.....each program stands alone. The RCND program stands alone and you are correct as there are other issues There are 4; this is one of the four. This program deals with Resource Conservation and Development dollars....different programs and we are looking for to combine these four efforts into one, but had to keep this separate because of the different program.

Patrick Hatlestad: Dist #1 Rep from Willison (Attachment #3)

Paul Overby: Lee Farms, Wolford, ND (Attachment #4)

Doug Graupe Divide County Commissioner (Williston Basin RE&D) (Attachment #5)

Senator Murphy: What is Mr. Sweeny's rational in his decision?

Graupe: No answer.....no rational

Senator Heckaman; Will this resolution get you where you need to be.....will it make Mr. Sweeny change his the way he makes decisions?

Graupe: I can only be hopeful that he will change his mind. Some feel that once this is over, he will continue his plans. We can only hope he will do that. Asked the secretary to go back 20 to the cooperative agreements we had.....never has one of the state conservationists questioned the ability of the local board to make the decision. The local boards are given guidelines and make decisions on the federal guide lines.

Senator Klein; Have you been with this group for a long time? You see a lot of conservationist come and go....obviously this gentleman is new and things are beginning to slip.....and the new guy came to town?

Graupe: Yes ...came in with a new approach, completely different from previous conservationists. Perhaps other information you should know is Ag Commissioner Goehring approached him to use equip funds to help farmers with the barrier around the field tanks and he didn't get an answer. Therefore he went to national office and he was scolded by the state con.....said if he wanted talk to him, you must go through me. All other state cons have been so cooperative.

Senator Klein; The conservationist from around the country didn't get together to approach this differently as national agenda?

Graupe: No change federally. State con Floory, who just left a short time ago...extremely cooperative.

Senator Klein: Mr. White in charge of the organization is coming to ND sometime this year to visit about issues. Is your organization planning time with him?

Graupe: I am sure we will and would appreciate the opportunity.

Duane Urlacker: President of Dakota West RE&D Council, Dickinson (Attachment #6)

Mary Stevens: Executive Director for Dakota Prairies RC&D Bismarck: I've been with the organization for 12 years, cover 10 counties. We have grants that we jointly manage for 18 counties. We had a state wide weed grant that we managed for all the RC&D in the state. We assisted in over 50 projects There are 4 core areas we can work in....one is community development grant and have the NRCS state conversations come in to we cannot fund those projects that is taking away something in our program. Our council is in full support of this resolution and voted to carry forward with this. By not moving forward, we are sending a message that all has been solved.....this is not happening. We urge you to vote in favor of this resolution.

Senator Klein: We have heard everyone is in favor of thisa few comments in oppositiondo you know why we would be getting any opposition? It sounds like a good resolution....why would we hear from anyone who would think we should continue on the same path?

Stevens: I have not seen the emails.....every issue has pros and cons....maybe the state conservation has negotiated with councils or individuals who we want to see the council involvement. That wasn't happening before this resolution.

Helen Schatz: Dakota Prairies RC&D Burleigh County (Retired County Commissioner) We are a 10 county wide council. Talked to a Commissioner from Grand Forks and asked what the bases of her email was to this committee or members in opposition to this resolution. She explained it was because the state con had been in there and discussed reason....budget and would not relieve them of their coordinator...moving them. Assumption the state con is going around and convincing the councils that he is will do the best he can....playing one council against another. Mr. Floores helped tremendously and other states modeled their program after ND. Support the HCR 3027 resolution.

Senator Klein; I am not looking at the down side and I am sure of where we are trying to go. Do you see any down side, retribution.....?

Helen Schatz: No, I read it this morning....I don't see any down side.....when I talked to the commissioner and she was concerned about forming an opinion without hearing both sides. I agree to putting more teeth in the letter.

Senator Larsen: What are his thought with him on dividing did you discuss this with him?

Schatz: Other states have modeled their programs after ND program. Haven't met him met him face to face. He avoided meeting with the group.....they asked him to meet with them and they want reasons why.

Senator Heckaman: Is this Mr. Sweeny first position of this nature or did he hold a position in another state?

Schatz: Ask another person

Jim Schmidt: The state conservationist in ND was the assistant state conservationist in Iowa prior to coming to ND. He has had some experience, but on the outside of the program. He made these decisions before meeting with the RC&D councils. Answer as to why some are against the resolutionthe state conservation is promoting contribution agreements instead of cooperative agreements and the RC&D council does not understand the difference. He has been promoting those since September.....has not entered into one agreement since then. Hasn't drafted one or any other. The people in the RC&D council are not understanding or knowledgeable of the program to the depth to be able to discuss that. He has had experience peripheral with the program before he did this.

Senator Larsen: Any other discussion, questions?

Senator Larsen Close the hearing.

2011 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Senate Agriculture Committee
Roosevelt Park Room, State Capitol

HCR 3027
March 11, 2011
Job # 15296

☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature

Greta Nelson

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

To allow a resource conservation and development coordinator collocated with a ND regional council to maintain that collocation.

Minutes:

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Vice Chairperson Senator Larsen: Meeting called to order on Friday, March 11, 2011 for HCR 3027 at 9:25 am.

Senator Heckaman; I received an email from local council and would like to work with Mr. Sweeney. They should have a chain of command and a way to deal with this issue. There are other ways to resolve this rather than putting a resolution out there....a resolution is just a piece of paper. I will not be supporting because I feel it should be resolved internally.

Senator Murphy; I was convenience yesterday from the testimony that it would be the proper recourse. They've done a lot of good and when you can leverage that little amount of money and do all the things they have done around the state, I was impressed with that as well as this going in a direction that is going to be competing against one another. I am not really comfortable with the resolution the legislature getting involved; I can understand how he got to this point. He did go through the chain of command and got re-buffed. I think he is backed into a corner with no other way out. I will be voting for this one.

Senator Miller; My name is on this bill.....I signed on because people from my area. Letter from president of the regional council from my district I am a little uneasy of the strong language fragile nature of fed programsmaybe we need to tread lightly around how we precede sending message. We must be cautious what message we send in this resolution.....maybe an amendment would proper.

Senator Klein; I don't think it is strong enough....this guy obviously isn't trying to work with the people that was shipped into NDmaybe we need a person from ND to understand what we do that we can get people who want to be involved in projects, volunteer their time, small amount of dollars go out and leverage those dollars against the money they get and do great things. That is the troubling part I getsometimes outsiders do not understand how North Dakotans function. Unless we send some sort of messagethat is probably the reason Mr. White is coming to ND because he is hearing all the

complaints....he is coming to find out what is going on with Mr. Sweeney. When you address the Ag commissioner as he did, when he treats these agencies as he is, is very troubling. I agree with Senator Heckaman it is a resolution, however, maybe someone will take a glance at it and realize there is a problem in ND. I hope they come around in the end and we can get it straightened out.

Senator Luick; Agree with Senator Klein; Others and I met with Mr. Sweeney a month ago and after the meeting, we were left with a lot of things that were not true. When a person in this position is doing these types of things along with the dishonesty....he needs to be watched. This paper probably isn't going anywhere, but what it will do is show that someone is looking at it and watching.....keeping the checks and balances.

Senator Larsen: With all those volunteers working at the local level where government is suppose to do its best. That is why I am a part of it.

Senator Larsen; Discussion?

Senator Miller; I move a Do Pass for HCR 3027

Senator Luick; Second

Senator Larsen: Discussion?

Senator Larsen; Clerk take roll call vote for Do Pass for HCR 3027

Clerk: 5-1-1 (Senator Flakoll absent)

Senator Larsen: Passes Senator Luick carries

Senator Larsen: Close hearing.

2011 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Senate Agriculture Committee
Roosevelt Park Room, State Capitol

HCR 3027
March 24, 2011
Job #15935

☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature

Greta Nelson

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

To allow a resource conservation and development coordinator collocated with a ND regional council to maintain that collocation.

Minutes:

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Senator Flakoll; Ready for motion

Senator Klein; I move we reconsider action we passed House Concurrent Resolution 3027

Senator Larsen; Second

Senator Flakoll; Clerk to take the vote for motion for reconsideration action for HCB 3027

Clerk: 7-0-0

Senator Flakoll; Look over the bill to see what has been composed

Senator Klein; Looking at the reference to the state conservationist out; primarily the changes, so what the resolution would now do is to keep this program going? It is working well and we think it is a good plan.

Senator Heckaman; I can support the amendments

Senator Heckaman: I move the amendments to HCR 302711.3054.02001

Senator Klein; second

Senator Flakoll; Discussion? This would take it from dealing with the person to dealing with supporting continuing what has happened in the past as Senator Klein; referenced. Clerk take roll for the adoption of 2001 amendments.

Clerk: 7-0-0

Senator Flakoll: Motion carries

Senator Flakoll; Any more amendment

Senator Larsen: Motion we amend the HCR 3027 as amended and Do Pass

Senator Miller; Second

Senator Larsen; When we started on this, it would open the door for other things to happen, but it is doing what intended. People need to know that you can't run over the agency and cause problems for what has been happening for year. There are consequences and the past business has been good and keep up the good work.

Senator Murphy; I agree with Senator Larsenit is nice but not sure if we need a resolution Seems pointless and take a conference committee and would prefer to kill it, but I will go along with the committee if that is the consensus.

Senator Heckaman; The amendments have changed the tone/resolution that I was objectionable to at the beginning, I do agree with the fact as Senator Murphya resolution is a resolution, doesn't hurt anything. After we brought this bill to the floor, I received an email the previous state director (?) lasted less than a year. Don't know if we are addressing the right problem, but is not objectionable to me right now.

Senator Miller; Intent as it sits now will serve as an indication of what the state of ND feels how this program should work. This is what we likewho the new person will be and should know not to "tinker" with it.

Senator Flakoll; Any belief they were "tinkering" for the better?

Senator Heckaman; In emails I received from our local council felt they wanted to work with him in a positive manner.....with the understanding the fed funding was being cut and the individual identified was trying to use those funds in a positive way through a grant process versus an allocation process. Not sure the person identified was trying to do bad things for the state....trying to use fed funds. We can expect many fed funds to decrease in the next few years. Maybe he was trying but stepping on toes in his process.

Senator Miller; Problem with previous conservationist was doingreally negating the purpose of having a council.....by biggest concern with what he was doing by taking the allocation away, relocate their staff, and that poses a challenge. That is why I felt a resolution was necessary to support the continuation of regional councils.

Senator Murphy: If we are losing the fed funding and still tell in this resolution if pass this out we want them to do it the same way and can't be doing in the same way, maybe we shouldn't be doing that?

Senator Miller; I agree with that. If you felt this resolution ...no passion for it....maybe we should kill it? I have no passion for it.

Senator Luick; I have no passion for it.

Senator Klein; A little passion for it. Senator Larsen summed it up with the ideatake a look at this....this program has been working great in NDwe appreciate and keep up the good work. Do not like to drop it and get rid of the gentleman....this is the idea are working hard and heard from a variety of people who spent a lot of their volunteer time. I will support it.....important to let them know it is working.

Senator Flakoll; Clerk take roll for Do Pass, as amended HCR 3027.

Clerk: 5-2-0

Senator Flakoll; Senator Luick carry

Senator Flakoll; Stand at ease

Date: 3/11/11

Roll Call Vote # 1

2011 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HCR 3027

Senate Agriculture Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken: ☒ Do Pass ☐ Do Not Pass ☐ Amended ☐ Adopt Amendment
☐ Rerefer to Appropriations ☐ Reconsider

Motion Made By Senator Miller Seconded By Senator Luick

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Chairman Flakoll			Senator Heckaman		✓
Vice-Chair Larsen	✓				
Senator Klein	✓				
Senator Luick	✓				
Senator Miller	✓				
Senator Murphy	✓				

Total (Yes) 5 No 1

Absent 1 (Senator Flakoll)

Floor Assignment Senator Luick

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

Date: 3/24/11

Roll Call Vote # 1

2011 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 3027

Senate Agriculture Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken: ☐ Do Pass ☐ Do Not Pass ☐ Amended ☐ Adopt Amendment
☐ Rerefer to Appropriations ☒ Reconsider

Motion Made By Senator Klein Seconded By Senator Larsen

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Chairman Flakoll	✓		Senator Heckaman	✓	
Vice-Chair Oley Larsen	✓				
Senator Klein	✓				
Senator Luick	✓				
Senator Miller	✓				
Senator Murphy	✓				

Total (Yes) 7 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Senator

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

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 3027

Page 1, line 1, remove "of no confidence in the Natural Resources Conservation Service's
state"

Page 1, line 2, remove "conservationist and"

Page 2, line 2, remove "and"

Page 2, remove lines 3 through 6

Page 2, line 9, remove "adopts this concurrent resolution of no"

Page 2, line 10, remove "confidence in the state conservationist and"

Renumber accordingly

Date: 3/24/11

Roll Call Vote # 2

2011 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HCR 3027

Senate Agriculture Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number 11.3054.02001

Action Taken: ☐ Do Pass ☐ Do Not Pass ☐ Amended ☒ Adopt Amendment
☐ Rerefer to Appropriations ☐ Reconsider

Motion Made By Senator Heckaman Seconded By Senator Klein

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Chairman Flakoll	✓		Senator Heckaman	✓	
Vice-Chair Oley Larsen	✓				
Senator Klein	✓				
Senator Luick	✓				
Senator Miller	✓				
Senator Murphy	✓				

Total (Yes) 7 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Senator

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

Date: 3/24/11

Roll Call Vote # 3

2011 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HCR 3027

Senate Agriculture Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken: ☒ Do Pass ☐ Do Not Pass ☒ Amended ☐ Adopt Amendment
☐ Rerefer to Appropriations ☐ Reconsider

Motion Made By Senator Larsen Seconded By Senator Miller

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Chairman Flakoll		✓	Senator Heckaman	✓	
Vice-Chair Oley Larsen	✓				
Senator Klein	✓				
Senator Luick	✓				
Senator Miller	✓				
Senator Murphy		✓			

Total (Yes) 5 No 2

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Senator Luick

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

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HCR 3027: Agriculture Committee (Sen. Flakoll, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS**
(5 YEAS, 1 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HCR 3027 was placed on the
Fourteenth order on the calendar.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HCR 3027: Agriculture Committee (Sen. Flakoll, Chairman) recommends AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (5 YEAS, 2 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HCR 3027 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

Page 1, line 1, remove "of no confidence in the Natural Resources Conservation Service's state"

Page 1, line 2, remove "conservationist and"

Page 2, line 2, remove "and"

Page 2, remove lines 3 through 6

Page 2, line 9, remove "adopts this concurrent resolution of no"

Page 2, line 10, remove "confidence in the state conservationist and"

Renumber accordingly

2011 TESTIMONY

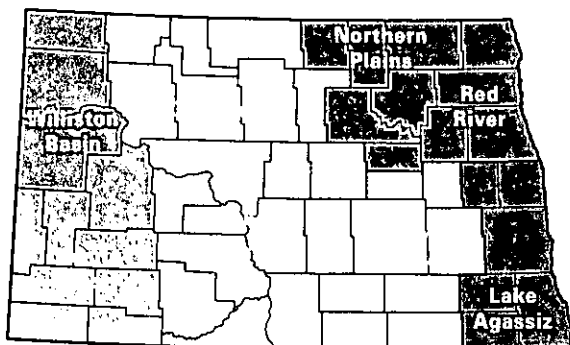
HCR 3027

#1
2/10/11
HCR 3027

For contact information for the North Dakota RC&D Councils, visit: www.ndrcd.org

For more information about the RC&D program, visit: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/rcd/>

You can also contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office. RC&D is listed in your telephone directory under U.S. Government, Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Resource Conservation and Development Areas



Helping People Help the Land

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 800-795-3272 (voice) or 202-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

NORTH DAKOTA Resource Conservation and Development





What is RC&D?

Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) is a unique program that helps people protect their natural resources and improve their economy, environment, and quality of life. Local RC&D councils bring people together to plan and implement projects that will make their communities better places to live.

Making it Happen— Local People Working Together

The strength of the RC&D program is bringing diverse groups of local people together to identify needs and solve community problems. Community leaders volunteer to establish RC&D councils. These councils represent sponsoring organizations within a multi-county region.

Strategies are determined and the project is implemented. Community pride is a key part of RC&D project success.

How Does RC&D Work?

North Dakota's RC&D Councils receive staffing and financial support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which provides a coordinator to work with one of eight councils in the state. RC&D coordinators work closely with councils to identify problems, establish goals and objectives, build strategies, and implement plans.

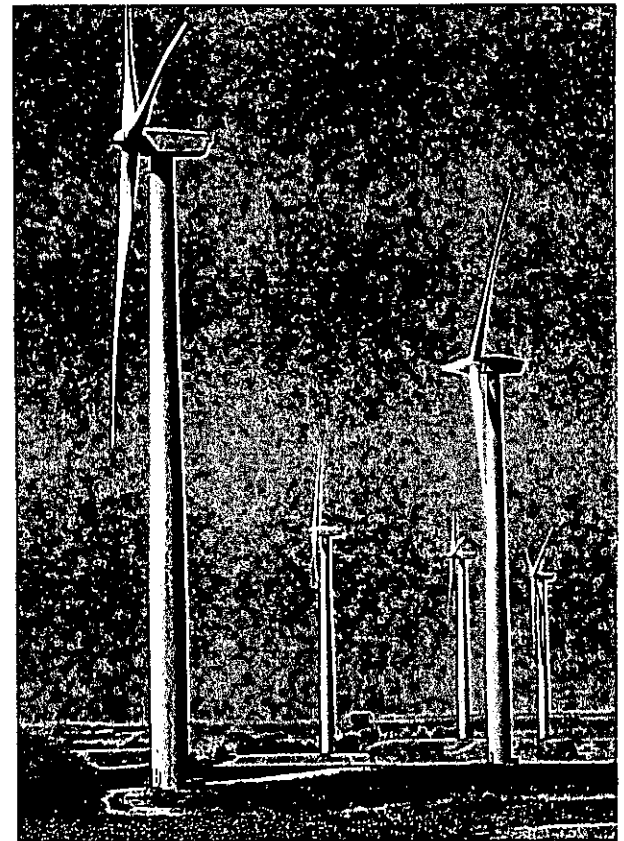
RC&D councils receive assistance from NRCS and many other partnering agencies and organizations. Priorities and policies are established by local people.

The Benefits

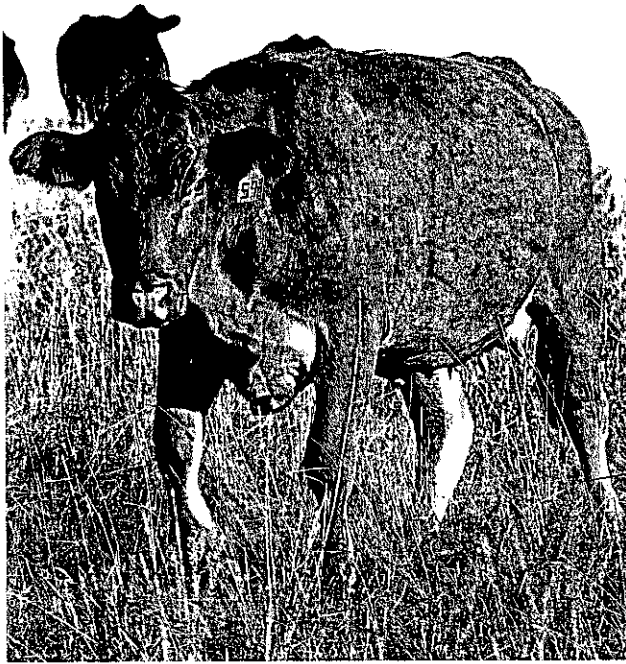
RC&D projects may create new jobs in agriculture, forestry, tourism, and other industries. Projects may focus on natural resource issues, or work to improve community development, economic growth, or the quality of life in a North Dakota community. All are designed to make communities more viable, productive, and better places to live.

Finding the Right Resources

RC&D councils seek and coordinate assistance from a variety of public and private sources. Assistance may include coordinating technical help from a government agency or private consultant. It could involve a financing package for a project that includes donations, loans, grants, or cost-sharing. Councils bring together people to achieve common goals.



Resource Conservation and ...Partnerships Empowering Comm



Land Conservation

Protects and improves the resource base



There are eight RC&D Councils in North Dakota to meet local needs. The RC&D program can solve their own problems. These issues include conservation, land or water management,



Community Development

Improves economic and community development in rural areas

Development...



unities — Making Things Happen!

Dakota. Each council defines its own goals
n is based on the idea that local people
must fall under the following criteria: land
community development.



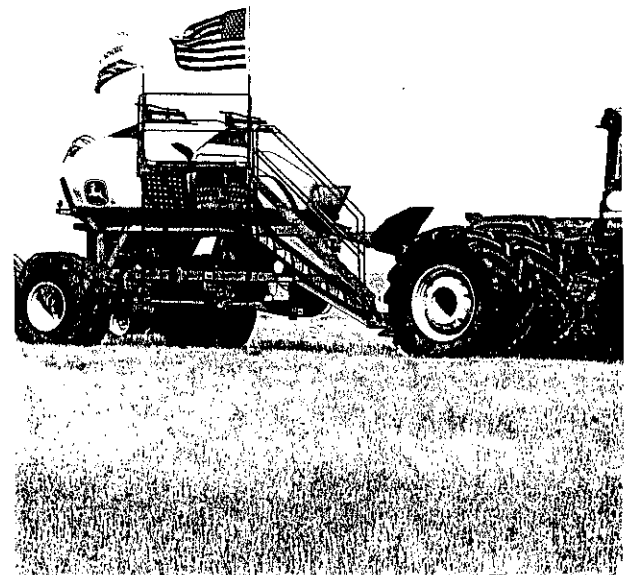
Water Management

Helps local people conserve, utilize,
and improve the quality and quantity
of available water



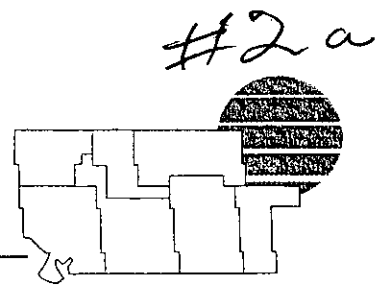
Land Management

Addresses rural and urban land use,
energy conservation, and fish and
wildlife habitat



Upper Dakota Resource, Conservation & Development Council

925 20th Ave. SW • P.O. Box 2024 • Minot, ND 58702-2024 • Phone (701) 839-8297 • Fax (701) 838-8955



December 14, 2010

Mr. Paul Sweeney, State Conservationist
Natural Resource and Conservation Service
P.O. Box 1458
Bismarck, North Dakota 58502-1458

Mr. Sweeney:

I would like to take the opportunity, on behalf of the Upper Dakota RC&D, to communicate our discontent with direction you are attempting to impose on our District. After meeting with you and your colleagues last month, the RC&D Executive Board had time to reflect on the issues discussed and now at our most recent Executive Board meeting has asked to me express the unanimous feelings regarding the future actions you are attempting to impose. The Upper Dakota RC&D can be a valuable resource for the citizens of this area, and it is the Board's hope that can continue and even be enhanced in the future.

First, your proposal to physically relocate the office of the Upper Dakota RC&D is utterly without merit. It may be your prerogative to locate the Coordinator to a place of your choosing, but it is not your prerogative to relocate the offices of the RC&D. The Upper Dakota RC&D is a non-profit organization registered as such under the laws of North Dakota with a C-4 designation from the IRS and further designated by NRCS as the RC&D for this region of the State. Your planned actions over step any authority you think you have in this matter. It is the authority of the District Board, who are the Upper Dakota RC&D, to decide where to locate their office. While not consulting District prior to your proposed action, you may have found better alternatives. The RC&D recognizes the co-location of the office with the Regional Planning Council is the best alternative. Both staffs work with the development of the region's resources and have similar work plans and goals. The current situation promotes a partnership that is beneficial and effective to both organizations. If consulted you would have been advised of alternatives to office space in the current location. Relocating the Coordinator jeopardizes the achievements and future success of our organization.

With respect to your recent decision to "discontinue the present format of cooperative agreements", the District Board has determined that is not an action that is conducive to the continued success of the RC&D program in North Dakota. Your proposed actions totally remove the local decision-making process that has proven successful and transferred to it a more bureaucratic process. Our District Board does not believe that prioritization of projects conducted by federal government staff, with no tie to local input, will be effective. What has been effective and successful is allowing the District to determine the best investment of NRCS resources and the leveraging of those funds to develop and enhance local projects.

page 2
Mr. Paul Sweeney
December 14, 2010

It is our hope that you will seriously consider the input of the Upper Dakota RC&D on these issues, and that your current plans can be altered. Our District at any time would be more than accommodating to discuss these issues further and offer any advice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margo Helgersen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Margo" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Helgersen".

Margo Helgersen
Chairman

cc: Mr. Jim Schmidt
All ND RC&Ds
Thomas Christenson
Terry D'Addio



DAKOTA WEST

#2b

RESOURCE, CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT AREA, INC.

Serving the Counties of:

Adams
Billings
Bowman
Dunn
Golden
Valley
Hettinger
Slope
Stark

Council Members

President

Duane Urlacher

Vice President

Frank Hatzembuhler

Secretary

Loren Myran

Treasurer

Dennis Reich

Past President

Richard M. Knopp, Jr.

Directors

Stan Blickensderfer

Shorty Hoerauf

Chip Fischer

Darrel Oech

James Odermann

Dr. Kris Ringwall

Don Urlacher

Jim Mossett

Calli Thorne

135 Sims, Suite 212
Dickinson, ND 58601

Phone: 701-225-8721
Fax: 701-225-1784

e-mail: dakotawest@rcdnet.net

November 5, 2010

Paul Sweeney, ND State Conservationist
USDA-NRCS
PO Box 1458
Bismarck, ND 58502-1458

Dear Mr. Sweeney:

RE: Cooperative Agreements for RC&Ds

I am writing this letter on behalf of Dakota West Resource Conservation & Development in response to your letter to our council dated October 8, 2010 on the discontinuance of the Cooperative Agreements for RC&Ds. Your letter is contradictory to what our council members heard at the North Dakota Resource Conservation & Development State Association meeting on September 22, 2010. We have read the minutes of this particular meeting and they do not support anything referred in your letter. Our council has many questions and concerns regarding your letter that our coordinator is unable to answer.

The program that we have worked with has operated well in the past. Our council has been fiscally responsible with the dollars entrusted to us. We are very proud of our accomplishments and we recognize that NRCS has been a valuable partner. I am very concerned the program's effectiveness may be in jeopardy with the discontinuance of the cooperative agreements.

Your letter was read at our October Council meeting and all Council members went on record to query you as a whole. We believe expanding the cooperative agreement would provide Dakota West with more opportunities, flexibility and creativeness to implement all four elements of the RC&D program.

Sincerely,

Duane Urlacher

Duane Urlacher
President

Cc:

Dakota West RC&D Council Members
Jim Schmidt, State Association, Mandan, ND
Jack Russell, State RC&D Program Manager, Bismarck, ND
Terry Gisvold, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations, Dickinson, ND
NDRC&D Councils
Jared Andrist, Coordinator, Dakota West RC&D, Dickinson, ND

SHEYENNE JAMES RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC.
1301 BUSINESS LOOP EAST
JAMESTOWN, ND 59401

#2C

November 17, 2010

Mr. Paul J. Sweeney,
NRCS State Conservationist
PO Box 1458
Bismarck, North Dakota 58502-1458

Greetings, Mr. Sweeney:

The Sheyenne James RC&D Council met today, November 17, 2010, for their regularly scheduled meeting. The Council discussed your correspondence dated October 8, 2010, with regard to support and stimulation funds which are normally appropriated to the Council to be used for local projects at their discretion.

We, as a grassroots organization, believe that discontinuing support and stimulation agreements is a step backwards for the RC&D program in North Dakota. The Sheyenne James RC&D Council has always used the appropriated funds wisely and conscientiously. The limited dollars in annual support & stimulation funding for relatively small projects in relatively small communities in North Dakota has gone a long way in public relations for the agency.

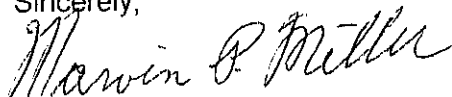
The RC&D program is all about building partnerships. To do this, we sometimes need incentives to build bridges for new and untraditional partnerships. One of our tools is the timely support and stimulation agreement which enhances and draws public attention and gratitude to the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

It is imperative that local Councils retain the ability to determine where funds are best used in their area.

We value our partnership with the Agency, however we feel that your directive will severely handicap the RC&D program in North Dakota.

Thank you again, and we are anxiously awaiting your comments.

Sincerely,



MARVIN MILLER, PRESIDENT
Sheyenne James RC&D Council

CC: Sheyenne James RC&D Council Members
Jim Schmidt, State Assn.
Jack Russell, State RC&D Program Manager

December 20, 2010

#22

Mr. Paul Sweeney, State Conservationist
Natural Resource and Conservation Service
PO Box 1458
Bismarck, ND 58502-1458

Dear Mr. Sweeney

First of all I would like you to know that our state association president, Jim Schmidt, is representing all of North Dakota's RC&D Councils as we have directed him to do and we support his actions. He is speaking on behalf of all 8 regional councils.

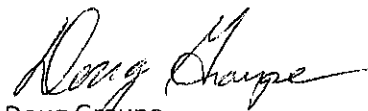
Having been involved in RC&D for many years, I feel that this is the best grass roots program of any I have been involved in. Decision making has been done locally by council volunteers that take their jobs very seriously and comply with the RC&D program objectives to conduct the process responsibly.

We have worked hard to make sure that each Council receives the same amount of money and are treated equally. Councils make the decisions locally and support the projects that are most important to their area. This includes community development projects that we believe are critical to North Dakota and agriculture. To discontinue this successful process and replace it with a competitive grant process is not acceptable. This would remove the local grass roots decision making process that is in place and instead places it in the hands of the federal government.

After our meeting with you in Bismarck, we thought we had made it clear that this program has worked well in the past and we would like to see it continue to run smoothly in the future. I have received calls from the Presidents of the other Councils around North Dakota. They are very concerned about the RC&D program. Do you realize the consternation you are causing?

I would ask that you reconsider your actions and allow our Councils to continue down the path that has been successful in the past.

Yours truly



Doug Graupe
Chairman, Williston Basin RC&D
Vice President, North Dakota RC&D Councils

Copy: Jim Schmidt
North Dakota RC&D Council Presidents
Terry D'Addio

Red River Resource Conservation & Development
Chase Building
516 Cooper Avenue Suite 101
Grafton, ND 58237



#2 e

January 3, 2011

Mr. Paul Sweeney, State Conservationist
USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service
PO Box 1458
Bismarck, ND 58502-1458

Dear Mr. Sweeney:

We have been requested to write to you and explain the Red River Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council's concerns and disappointment with the direction you are attempting to impose on our Region. The feelings are unanimous. We find ourselves very concerned about the future of the RC&D in our region if those directions are implemented. The Red River RC&D has been a very valuable grass roots resource in our region, and we believe it can continue to be a great asset to the citizens as we work together to enhance our rural communities, making them the best possible environment in which to live, work and play.

First, we would propose not to relocate, as it is not in our best interest and would be without merit. The Red River RC&D recognizes the co-location of the office with the Regional Planning Council to be the optimal location. The staffs of both entities work with development of the region's resources and have similar work plans and goals. The current situation promotes a partnership that is beneficial and very effective for both organizations. Relocating the RC&D Coordinator's office would jeopardize the achievements and future success of our organization.

Secondly, your decision to "discontinue the present format of cooperative agreements" is not an action that is conducive to the continued success of the RC&D program in North Dakota. Your proposed action would completely remove the local decision-making process that has proven to be successful, and transfer it to a more bureaucratic process. Prioritization of projects conducted by Federal government staff, with no ties to local input, would be highly ineffective. What has been effective and successful to our local communities is to determine the best investment of resources and to leverage funds to develop and enhance local projects.

It is our hope that the wishes of the Red River RC&D Council will be seriously considered on these important issues. We ask that you take the time to personally consult with us to discuss any changes that are planned, and give us the opportunity to convey what we feel is best for our region's communities. We live here in rural North Dakota and take great pride in providing a resource to local projects that are very tangible, and which might not be possible without our

financial support. We are very much appreciated by the communities. Only when we work together can rural communities continue to be strong and healthy places to live, work and play.

Sincerely,

Vern Russum

Vern Russum, President
RC&D Council Members

pc: Senator Kent Conrad
Senator John Hoeven
Representative Rick Berg
✓ Jim Schmidt, RC&D State President
Terry D'Addio, Federal RC&D President
North Dakota State RC&D Council Presidents

Muriel Stadstad
Jim Schroeder
Makyn W. Kelson
Gene Gehrke
W. J. K.
Corene Vaughn
Helen Corzetto

#3

North Dakota 09/10 Summary Completed Community			
RC&D	Project Name	RC&D Council Administered Funds Provided	Total project Cost
Dakota Prairies	Bakker School District Playground Project	\$250.00	\$1,800.00
Dakota Prairies	Linton Pool Steps Project	\$1,000.00	\$3,647.00
Dakota Prairies	Sheridan County 4-H Building Addition	\$250.00	\$36,052.00
Dakota Prairies	Sheridan Co. 4-H Building Addition project-	\$750.00	\$1,002.00
Dakota Prairies	Standing Rock Scrap Tire Disposal Project	\$1,000.00	\$13,713.00
Dakota Prairies	CCEE 2008 ND Envirothon	\$1,000.00	\$14,485.00
Dakota Prairies	Farm Rescue- 2008	\$500.00	\$54,249.00
Dakota Prairies	2009 ND Envirothon Competition Project	\$1,000.00	\$1,182.00
Dakota Prairies	Farm Rescue- 2009	\$250.00	\$64,985.00
Dakota Prairies	Dakota Prairies AFP Conference	\$351.00	\$351.00
Dakota Prairies	2010 Envirothon	\$1,000.00	\$14,669.00
Dakota Prairies	Zonta Park Tree Project	\$500.00	\$2,500.00
Upper Dakota	Playsafe Area - Lignite	\$250.00	\$26,693.00
Upper Dakota	Kramer Park Renovation	\$300.00	\$4,256.00
Upper Dakota	Buffalo Lodge Electricity	\$330.00	\$3,232.00
Upper Dakota	Farm Rescue	\$500.00	\$50,132.00
Upper Dakota	Plaza Park Project	\$330.00	\$1,413.00
Red River	Jugville Restoration	\$500.00	\$5,500.00
Red River	Stump Lake Park Village	\$500.00	\$26,943.00
Red River	Grafton Bike Path Lighting	\$500.00	\$49,440.00
Red River	Stump Lake Park Campground	\$500.00	\$75,270.00
Red River	Historical Josephine Garnett Home Repair	\$500.00	\$1,733.00
Red River	Capacity Building	\$1,184.00	\$2,654.00
Red River	Envirothon	\$500.00	\$2,917.00
Red River	Arts and Heritage Festival	\$250.00	\$10,062.00
Red River	Park River Rescue Truck	\$715.00	\$8,000.00
Red River	Pembina County Historical Sawmill	\$750.00	\$3,284.00
Red River	Stump Lake Pioneer Village Church	\$500.00	\$27,443.00
Red River	Farm Rescue	\$500.00	\$343,230.00
Red River	Emarado Playground	\$500.00	\$47,075.00
Williston Basin	Envirothon	\$500.00	\$51,200.00
Williston Basin	W.C. Baseball Grandstand	\$1,000.00	\$49,000.00
Williston Basin	MarketPlace for Kids	\$500.00	\$27,160.00
Williston Basin	Mon-Dak Ag Open	\$500.00	\$82,830.00
Williston Basin	Divide County Museum Software	\$500.00	\$7,500.00
Williston Basin	Tioga Theater Projector	\$375.00	\$1,125.00
Williston Basin	Tourist Park Picnic Shelter	\$800.00	\$26,600.00
Williston Basin	Little Beaver Bay Station	\$500.00	\$93,465.00
Williston Basin	MarketPlace for Kids	\$500.00	\$26,572.00
Williston Basin	McKenzie Co Rescue Truck	\$800.00	\$276,500.00
Dakota West	Donations for Schools & Nonprofits	\$840.00	\$13,706.00
Dakota West	File of Life	\$400.00	\$10,419.00

Lake Agassiz	Tinky Field Improvements	\$860.00	\$17,000.00
Lake Agassiz	Bagg Bonanza Farm Main House Renovation	\$500.00	\$10,000.00
Lake Agassiz	Enderlin Wellness Center	\$1,000.00	\$81,200.00
Lake Agassiz	Hank. Am. Legion NRL Site & Veteran's Mem.	\$1,000.00	\$11,700.00
Lake Agassiz	ND Geographic Alliance; NDFS Teacher Tour	\$750.00	\$15,000.00
Lake Agassiz	McLeod Historical Society Brochure	\$250.00	\$1,500.00
Lake Agassiz	Cinema Projection Project - Peace Gardens	\$250.00	\$9,260.00
Lake Agassiz	Japanese Garden (Yunkers Farm)	\$500.00	\$6,955.00
Lake Agassiz	Habitat ReStore Awareness Project	\$500.00	\$2,000.00
Lake Agassiz	Hatton Swimming Pool	\$1,000.00	\$39,500.00
Northern Plains	MarketPlace for Kids	\$200.00	\$4,433.00
Northern Plains	Sheyenne School Adaptive Reuse	\$400.00	\$36,594.00
Northern Plains	Sarles School National Registers Nomination	\$250.00	\$1,673.00
Northern Plains	Community Connection Forum	\$500.00	\$11,396.00
Northern Plains	Hawk Museum Doll House Expansion	\$750.00	\$4,290.00
Northern Plains	Farm Rescue	\$600.00	\$125,285.00
Northern Plains	Spirit Lake Nation Vaulted Restrooms	\$800.00	\$12,470.00
Northern Plains	Park Vue Apartments Renovation	\$750.00	\$7,500.00
Northern Plains	Summer Explorer Camp	\$300.00	\$4,240.00
Northern Plains	Turtle Mountain Conservation Day Camp	\$100.00	\$1,500.00
Northern Plains	Cinema Projection Project	\$500.00	\$6,125.00
Northern Plains	AMACHI (Retired and Senior Program)	\$1,000.00	\$33,000.00
Sheyenne James	Envirothon	\$500.00	\$20,749.00
Sheyenne James	WAHLU Outdoor Youth Program	\$500.00	\$2,289.00
Sheyenne James	Bowdon Promotion Project	\$1,000.00	\$5,233.00
Sheyenne James	LaMoure Logan Bookmobile	\$1,000.00	\$140,548.00
Sheyenne James	North Country Trail Project	\$500.00	\$7,681.00
Sheyenne James	Adrian Park Restoration Project	\$1,260.00	\$20,000.00
Sheyenne James	Foster Ladies Ag Night	\$500.00	\$1,204.00
Sheyenne James	James River Ladies Ag Night	\$500.00	\$5,030.00
Sheyenne James	Farm Rescue	\$1,000.00	\$64,285.00
	Total	\$43,695.00	\$2,273,629.00

HCR 3027

Page 1 of 1

#4

James Schmidt <tjschmidt@extendwireless.net> 02/10/11 6:39AM

Print Cancel

From: "Peoples State Bank" <psb@srt.com>
To: <tjschmidt@extendwireless.net>
Received-On: Yesterday 6:40 PM
Subject: RE: Resolution
More...

I wish I could be there to say a few words. Upper Dakota RC&D is in favor of the Resolution. The RC&D's are important to the community and the decisions need to say with the local organizations. We are the ones that know what is important to our area and what needs to be done. Thank you.

Margo Helgeson

HCA 3027

Page 1 of 1

#5

James Schmidt <tjschmidt@extendwireless.net> 02/10/11 6:40AM

Print Cancel

From: <debbiev@westriv.com>
To: tjschmidt@extendwireless.net
Cc: debbie.vollmuth@nd.nacdn.net
Received-On: Yesterday 8:47 AM
Subject: Re: Resolution
More...

I fully support the resolution that Mr. Schmidt is bringing before you today. It is important to fund the RC&D councils and let the grassroots organization decide where that funding would best be utilized. Community development projects have always played an important role in our organization and we hope to keep it that way.

Thank you,
Deborah Vollmuth
Dakota Prairies RC&D
Chairman

#1

VICE CHAIRMAN LARSEN AND MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE, MY NAME IS JIM SCHMIDT, REPRESENTATIVE OF DISTRICT 31 AND SPONSOR OF HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 3027 THAT YOU ARE HEARING THIS MORNING.

I AM ALSO THE PRESIDENT OF THE NORTH DAKOTA RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ASSOCIATION. I AM A MEMBER OF THE DAKOTA PRAIRIES RCD REPRESENTING THE MORTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS. I AM RETIRED AFTER 33 YEARS WITH NRCS OF WHICH 14 YEARS WERE SPENT AS NRCS PROGRAM MANAGER OF THE RCD PROGRAM.

AS PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION, I REPRESENT, AND TAKE DIRECTION FROM THE PRESIDENTS OF THE 8 COUNCILS.

HCR 3027 IS A RESULT OF A PRESIDENT'S VOTE OF 7-0, WITH ONE ABSENT, TO ADDRESS THE RECENT ACTIONS OF THE USDA-NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE'S STATE CONSERVATIONIST REGARDING THE RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

I AM NOT GOING TO DISCUSS THE RCD PROGRAM SINCE YOU PROVIDED ME THAT OPPORTUNITY EARLIER. MY FOCUS IS ON THE RESOLUTION—WHY IT WAS INITIATED AND WHAT WE EXPECT IT TO ACHIEVE.

THE RESOLUTION REQUESTS THAT THE NRCS STATE CONSERVATIONIST RESTORE 3 RCD PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AS THEY WERE AND HAVE BEEN FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS. NOTHING IN THE RESOLUTION IS ABOVE OR BEYOND WHAT WAS DONE PRIOR TO THIS STATE CONSERVATIONIST'S ARRIVAL IN FEBRUARY 2010. DOING SUCH WOULD ALLOW THE RCD COUNCILS TO CONTINUE PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO NORTH DAKOTA AND INDIAN RESERVATIONS.

(REVIEW THE CALENDAR OF EVENTS)

WHILE YOU MAY HAVE RECEIVED STATEMENTS OF OPPOSITION FROM RCD COUNCIL MEMBERS, AT NO TIME HAVE I RECEIVED ANY COMMUNICATIONS FROM A RCD COUNCIL PRESIDENT TO WITHDRAW HCR 3027.

PRIOR TO THE RESOLUTION, THE STATE CONSERVATIONIST DECIDED, WITHOUT CONCURRENCE OF THE RESPECTIVE RCD COUNCIL, TO MOVE THEIR RCD COORDINATOR. THAT COORDINATOR HAS BEEN RE-ASSIGNED TO ANOTHER PROGRAM AND TRANSFERED TO FARGO. NO ACTIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO DATE TO REPLACE THAT INDIVIDUAL.

SINCE THE RESOLUTION, THE STATE CONSERVATIONIST HAS INFORMED AN RCD THAT HE WILL NOT RE-LOCATE THEIR RCD COORDINATOR, WHICH WAS HIS PLAN PRIOR TO THE RESOLUTION.

IT IS OUR SINCERE BELIEF, BASED ON THE ACTIONS OF THE STATE CONSERVATIONIST, HIS WRITTEN STATEMENT AND HIS SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSE, THAT WE WILL NOT BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO RESTORE THE LOCAL DECISION MAKING PROCESS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF HCR 3027. HCR 3027 WILL MAKE OUR POINT TO THE NRCS NATIONAL LEADERSHIP.

THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE VOTED 13-0 "DO PASS" FOR HCR 3027.

WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR CONCURRENCE SO THAT THE VOLUNTEERS TO THE RCD COUNCILS MAY CONTINUE WITH LOCAL DECISION-MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION.

I STAND FOR ANY QUESTIONS.

Red River Resource Conservation & Development
Chase Building
516 Cooper Avenue Suite 101
Grafton, ND 58237



January 3, 2011

Mr. Paul Sweeney, State Conservationist
USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service
PO Box 1458
Bismarck, ND 58502-1458

Dear Mr. Sweeney:

We have been requested to write to you and explain the Red River Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council's concerns and disappointment with the direction you are attempting to impose on our Region. The feelings are unanimous. We find ourselves very concerned about the future of the RC&D in our region if those directions are implemented. The Red River RC&D has been a very valuable grass roots resource in our region, and we believe it can continue to be a great asset to the citizens as we work together to enhance our rural communities, making them the best possible environment in which to live, work and play.

First, we would propose not to relocate, as it is not in our best interest and would be without merit. The Red River RC&D recognizes the co-location of the office with the Regional Planning Council to be the optimal location. The staffs of both entities work with development of the region's resources and have similar work plans and goals. The current situation promotes a partnership that is beneficial and very effective for both organizations. Relocating the RC&D Coordinator's office would jeopardize the achievements and future success of our organization.

Secondly, your decision to "discontinue the present format of cooperative agreements" is not an action that is conducive to the continued success of the RC&D program in North Dakota. Your proposed action would completely remove the local decision-making process that has proven to be successful, and transfer it to a more bureaucratic process. Prioritization of projects conducted by Federal government staff, with no ties to local input, would be highly ineffective. What has been effective and successful to our local communities is to determine the best investment of resources and to leverage funds to develop and enhance local projects.

It is our hope that the wishes of the Red River RC&D Council will be seriously considered on these important issues. We ask that you take the time to personally consult with us to discuss any changes that are planned, and give us the opportunity to convey what we feel is best for our region's communities. We live here in rural North Dakota and take great pride in providing a resource to local projects that are very tangible, and which might not be possible without our

financial support. We are very much appreciated by the communities. Only when we work together can rural communities continue to be strong and healthy places to live, work and play.

Sincerely,

Vern Russum

Vern Russum, President
RC&D Council Members

pc: Senator Kent Conrad
Senator John Hoeven
Representative Rick Berg
✓ Jim Schmidt, RC&D State President
Terry D'Addio, Federal RC&D President
North Dakota State RC&D Council Presidents

Muriel Stastab

Jim Khreed

Marilyn W. Graham

Gene Gehake

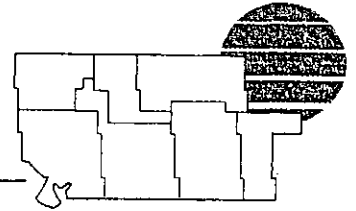
W. J. K.

Corene Vaughn

Helen Corzetto

Upper Dakota

Resource, Conservation & Development Council



925 20th Ave. SW • P.O. Box 2024 • Minot, ND 58702-2024 • Phone (701) 839-8297 • Fax (701) 838-8955

December 14, 2010

Mr. Paul Sweeney, State Conservationist
Natural Resource and Conservation Service
P.O. Box 1458
Bismarck, North Dakota 58502-1458

Mr. Sweeney:

I would like to take the opportunity, on behalf of the Upper Dakota RC&D, to communicate our discontent with direction you are attempting to impose on our District. After meeting with you and your colleagues last month, the RC&D Executive Board had time to reflect on the issues discussed and now at our most recent Executive Board meeting has asked to me express the unanimous feelings regarding the future actions you are attempting to impose. The Upper Dakota RC&D can be a valuable resource for the citizens of this area, and it is the Board's hope that can continue and even be enhanced in the future.


First, your proposal to physically relocate the office of the Upper Dakota RC&D is utterly without merit. It may be your prerogative to locate the Coordinator to a place of your choosing, but it is not your prerogative to relocate the offices of the RC&D. The Upper Dakota RC&D is a non-profit organization registered as such under the laws of North Dakota with a C-4 designation from the IRS and further designated by NRCS as the RC&D for this region of the State. Your planned actions over step any authority you think you have in this matter. It is the authority of the District Board, who are the Upper Dakota RC&D, to decide where to locate their office. While not consulting District prior to your proposed action, you may have found better alternatives. The RC&D recognizes the co-location of the office with the Regional Planning Council is the best alternative. Both staffs work with the development of the region's resources and have similar work plans and goals. The current situation promotes a partnership that is beneficial and effective to both organizations. If consulted you would have been advised of alternatives to office space in the current location. Relocating the Coordinator jeopardizes the achievements and future success of our organization.

With respect to your recent decision to "discontinue the present format of cooperative agreements", the District Board has determined that is not an action that is conducive to the continued success of the RC&D program in North Dakota. Your proposed actions totally remove the local decision-making process that has proven successful and transferred to it a more bureaucratic process. Our District Board does not believe that prioritization of projects conducted by federal government staff, with no tie to local input, will be effective. What has been effective and successful is allowing the District to determine the best investment of NRCS resources and the leveraging of those funds to develop and enhance local projects.

page 2
Mr. Paul Sweeney
December 14, 2010

It is our hope that you will seriously consider the input of the Upper Dakota RC&D on these issues, and that your current plans can be altered. Our District at any time would be more than accommodating to discuss these issues further and offer any advice.

Sincerely,



Margo Helgersen
Chairman

cc: Mr. Jim Schmidt
All ND RC&Ds
Thomas Christenson
Terry D'Addio

James Schmidt <tjschmidt@extendwireless.net> 02/10/11 6:47AM

Print Cancel

From:	Robert Curl <bjlruc@gondtc.com>
To:	Jim Schmidt <tjschmidt@extendwireless.net>
Received-On:	01/09/11 4:57 PM
Subject:	Fwd: RC&D Issues
More...	

Begin forwarded message:

From: Robert Curl <bjlruc@gondtc.com>
Date: January 9, 2011 4:55:34 PM CST
To: Thomas.christensen@wdc.usda.gov
Subject: RC&D Issues

Dear Mr Christensen

Some time ago I e-mailed you in regard to an issue here in ND with our state conservation coordinator, and his lack of funding the eight councils in ND.

Apparently I did not have your correct e-mail address, and I am sorry for the tech. problem.

Never the less the issue with funding is still at hand, with Mr Sweeney, and none of the councils in ND have a handle on funding in this new year. To the best of my knowledge the funds for RC&D,s are in place, but for some reason Mr Sweeney will not release them to the councils. In the past ten years or more, each council has been allocated the total funding of \$10,000, no more no less, that we designated as support and stimulation funds. These funds were to be used for any projects, within the councils plan of work, that the councils deemed fitting. Many councils in our state work with small communities, as small as 50 to 70 people, that have problems with their small inferstructures that must mandate federal regulations, and have literally have no one to turn to, but they know RC&D is about community projects, and they ask for some help. To me community projects, big and ever so small, are what RC&D is all about. To us here in the great plains, PEOPLE are our greatest ASSET!!!. Mr Sweeney has told us we cannot use federal funding for community projects.

This is a fact. In the years of 2009 & 10, the eight ND councils turned \$42000 of S&S and coop agreements into 2.2 million dollars into the economy of our state. This was done with only 73 projects. I have an idea that at least a fourth or perhaps a third of the 73 projects were "Community projects".

Myself, and my entire council are at our wits end, not knowing what to do for funding in this new year. I would be thrilled to hear from your office as too what we might do to convince Mr Sweeney that the system were using works, and please let us carry on our work.

December 20, 2010

Mr. Paul Sweeney, State Conservationist
Natural Resource and Conservation Service
PO Box 1458
Bismarck, ND 58502-1458

Dear Mr. Sweeney

First of all I would like you to know that our state association president, Jim Schmidt, is representing all of North Dakota's RC&D Councils as we have directed him to do and we support his actions. He is speaking on behalf of all 8 regional councils.

Having been involved in RC&D for many years, I feel that this is the best grass roots program of any I have been involved in. Decision making has been done locally by council volunteers that take their jobs very seriously and comply with the RC&D program objectives to conduct the process responsibly.

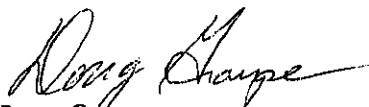
We have worked hard to make sure that each Council receives the same amount of money and are treated equally. Councils make the decisions locally and support the projects that are most important to their area. This includes community development projects that we believe are critical to North Dakota and agriculture.

Discontinue this successful process and replace it with a competitive grant process is not acceptable. This would remove the local grass roots decision making process that is in place and instead places it in the hands of the federal government.

After our meeting with you in Bismarck, we thought we had made it clear that this program has worked well in the past and we would like to see it continue to run smoothly in the future. I have received calls from the Presidents of the other Councils around North Dakota. They are very concerned about the RC&D program. Do you realize the consternation you are causing?

I would ask that you reconsider your actions and allow our Councils to continue down the path that has been successful in the past.

Yours truly



Doug Graupe
Chairman, Williston Basin RC&D
Vice President, North Dakota RC&D Councils

Copy: Jim Schmidt
North Dakota RC&D Council Presidents
Terry D'Addio

SHEYENNE JAMES RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC.
1301 BUSINESS LOOP EAST
JAMESTOWN, ND 58401

November 17, 2010

Mr. Paul J. Sweeney,
NRCS State Conservationist
PO Box 1458
Bismarck, North Dakota 58502-1458

Greetings, Mr. Sweeney:

The Sheyenne James RC&D Council met today, November 17, 2010, for their regularly scheduled meeting. The Council discussed your correspondence dated October 8, 2010, with regard to support and stimulation funds which are normally appropriated to the Council to be used for local projects at their discretion.

We, as a grassroots organization, believe that discontinuing support and stimulation agreements is a step backwards for the RC&D program in North Dakota. The Sheyenne James RC&D Council has always used the appropriated funds wisely and conscientiously. The limited dollars in annual support & stimulation funding for relatively small projects in relatively small communities in North Dakota has gone a long way in public relations for the agency.

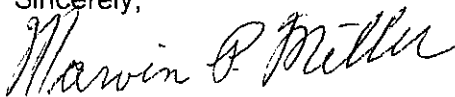
The RC&D program is all about building partnerships. To do this, we sometimes need incentives to build bridges for new and untraditional partnerships. One of our tools is the timely support and stimulation agreement which enhances and draws public attention and gratitude to the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

It is imperative that local Councils retain the ability to determine where funds are best used in their area.

We value our partnership with the Agency, however we feel that your directive will severely handicap the RC&D program in North Dakota.

Thank you again, and we are anxiously awaiting your comments.

Sincerely,



MARVIN MILLER, PRESIDENT
Sheyenne James RC&D Council

CC: Sheyenne James RC&D Council Members
Jim Schmidt, State Assn.
Jack Russell, State RC&D Program Manager



DAKOTA WEST

RESOURCE, CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT AREA, INC.

Serving the Counties of:

Adams
Billings
Bowman
Dunn
Golden
Valley
Hettinger
Slope
Stark

Council Members

President

Duane Urlacher

Vice President

Frank Hatzenbuehler

Secretary

Loren Myran

Treasurer

Dennis Reich

Past President

Richard M. Knopp, Jr.

Directors

Stan Blickensderfer

Shorty Hoerauf

Chip Fischer

Darrel Oech

James Odermann

Dr. Kris Ringwall

Don Uriacher

Jim Mossett

Calli Thorne

135 Sims, Suite 212
Dickinson, ND 58601

Phone: 701-225-8721
Fax: 701-225-1784

e-mail: dakotawest@rcdnet.net

November 5, 2010

Paul Sweeney, ND State Conservationist
USDA-NRCS
PO Box 1458
Bismarck, ND 58502-1458

Dear Mr. Sweeney:

RE: Cooperative Agreements for RC&Ds

I am writing this letter on behalf of Dakota West Resource Conservation & Development in response to your letter to our council dated October 8, 2010 on the discontinuance of the Cooperative Agreements for RC&Ds. Your letter is contradictory to what our council members heard at the North Dakota Resource Conservation & Development State Association meeting on September 22, 2010. We have read the minutes of this particular meeting and they do not support anything referred in your letter. Our council has many questions and concerns regarding your letter that our coordinator is unable to answer.

The program that we have worked with has operated well in the past. Our council has been fiscally responsible with the dollars entrusted to us. We are very proud of our accomplishments and we recognize that NRCS has been a valuable partner. I am very concerned the program's effectiveness may be in jeopardy with the discontinuance of the cooperative agreements.

Your letter was read at our October Council meeting and all Council members went on record to query you as a whole. We believe expanding the cooperative agreement would provide Dakota West with more opportunities, flexibility and creativeness to implement all four elements of the RC&D program.

Sincerely,

Duane Urlacher
President

Cc:

Dakota West RC&D Council Members
Jim Schmidt, State Association, Mandan, ND
Jack Russell, State RC&D Program Manager, Bismarck, ND
Terry Gisvold, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations, Dickinson, ND
NDRC&D Councils
Jared Andrist, Coordinator, Dakota West RC&D, Dickinson, ND

All programs and services of Dakota West RC&D Area, Inc. are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status or disability.

North Dakota 09/10 Summary Completed Community

RC&D	Project Name	RC&D Council Administered Funds Provided	Total project Cost
Dakota Prairies	Bakker School District Playground Project	\$250.00	\$1,800.00
Dakota Prairies	Linton Pool Steps Project	\$1,000.00	\$3,647.00
Dakota Prairies	Sheridan County 4-H Building Addition	\$250.00	\$36,052.00
Dakota Prairies	Sheridan Co. 4-H Building Addition project-	\$750.00	\$1,002.00
Dakota Prairies	Standing Rock Scrap Tire Disposal Project	\$1,000.00	\$13,713.00
Dakota Prairies	CCEE 2008 ND Envirothon	\$1,000.00	\$14,485.00
Dakota Prairies	Farm Rescue- 2008	\$500.00	\$54,249.00
Dakota Prairies	2009 ND Envirothon Competition Project	\$1,000.00	\$1,182.00
Dakota Prairies	Farm Rescue- 2009	\$250.00	\$64,985.00
Dakota Prairies	Dakota Prairies AFP Conference	\$351.00	\$351.00
Dakota Prairies	2010 Envirothon	\$1,000.00	\$14,669.00
Dakota Prairies	Zonta Park Tree Project	\$500.00	\$2,500.00
Upper Dakota	Playsafe Area - Lignite	\$250.00	\$26,693.00
Upper Dakota	Kramer Park Renovation	\$300.00	\$4,256.00
Upper Dakota	Buffalo Lodge Electricity	\$330.00	\$3,232.00
Upper Dakota	Farm Rescue	\$500.00	\$50,132.00
Upper Dakota	Plaza Park Project	\$330.00	\$1,413.00
Red River	Jugville Restoration	\$500.00	\$5,500.00
Red River	Stump Lake Park Village	\$500.00	\$26,943.00
Red River	Grafton Bike Path Lighting	\$500.00	\$49,440.00
Red River	Stump Lake Park Campground	\$500.00	\$75,270.00
Red River	Historical Josephine Garnett Home Repair	\$500.00	\$1,733.00
Red River	Capacity Building	\$1,184.00	\$2,654.00
Red River	Envirothon	\$500.00	\$2,917.00
Red River	Arts and Heritage Festival	\$250.00	\$10,062.00
Red River	Park River Rescue Truck	\$715.00	\$8,000.00
Red River	Pembina County Historical Sawmill	\$750.00	\$3,284.00
Red River	Stump Lake Pioneer Village Church	\$500.00	\$27,443.00
Red River	Farm Rescue	\$500.00	\$343,230.00
Red River	Emerado Playground	\$500.00	\$47,075.00
Williston Basin	Envirothon	\$500.00	\$51,200.00
Williston Basin	W.C. Baseball Grandstand	\$1,000.00	\$49,000.00
Williston Basin	MarketPlace for Kids	\$500.00	\$27,160.00
Williston Basin	Mon-Dak Ag Open	\$500.00	\$82,830.00
Williston Basin	Divide County Museum Software	\$500.00	\$7,500.00
Williston Basin	Tioga Theater Projector	\$375.00	\$1,125.00
Williston Basin	Tourist Park Picnic Shelter	\$800.00	\$26,600.00
Williston Basin	Little Beaver Bay Station	\$500.00	\$93,465.00
Williston Basin	MarketPlace for Kids	\$500.00	\$26,572.00
Williston Basin	McKenzie Co Rescue Truck	\$800.00	\$276,500.00
North Dakota West	Donations for Schools & Nonprofits	\$840.00	\$13,706.00
North Dakota West	File of Life	\$400.00	\$10,419.00

Lake Agassiz	Tinky Field Improvements	\$860.00	\$17,000.00
Lake Agassiz	Bagg Bonanza Farm Main House Renovation	\$500.00	\$10,000.00
Lake Agassiz	Enderlin Wellness Center	\$1,000.00	\$81,200.00
Lake Agassiz	Hank. Am. Legion NRL Site & Veteran's Mem.	\$1,000.00	\$11,700.00
Lake Agassiz	ND Geographic Alliance; NDFS Teacher Tour	\$750.00	\$15,000.00
Lake Agassiz	McLeod Historical Society Brochure	\$250.00	\$1,500.00
Lake Agassiz	Cinema Projection Project - Peace Gardens	\$250.00	\$9,260.00
Lake Agassiz	Japanese Garden (Yunkers Farm)	\$500.00	\$6,955.00
Lake Agassiz	Habitat ReStore Awareness Project	\$500.00	\$2,000.00
Lake Agassiz	Hatton Swimming Pool	\$1,000.00	\$39,500.00
Northern Plains	MarketPlace for Kids	\$200.00	\$4,433.00
Northern Plains	Sheyenne School Adaptive Reuse	\$400.00	\$36,594.00
Northern Plains	Sarles School National Registers Nomination	\$250.00	\$1,673.00
Northern Plains	Community Connection Forum	\$500.00	\$11,396.00
Northern Plains	Hawk Museum Doll House Expansion	\$750.00	\$4,290.00
Northern Plains	Farm Rescue	\$600.00	\$125,285.00
Northern Plains	Spirit Lake Nation Vaulted Restrooms	\$800.00	\$12,470.00
Northern Plains	Park Vue Apartments Renovation	\$750.00	\$7,500.00
Northern Plains	Summer Explorer Camp	\$300.00	\$4,240.00
Northern Plains	Turtle Mountain Conservation Day Camp	\$100.00	\$1,500.00
Northern Plains	Cinema Projection Project	\$500.00	\$6,125.00
Northern Plains	AMACHI (Retired and Senior Program)	\$1,000.00	\$33,000.00
Sheyenne James	Envirothon	\$500.00	\$20,749.00
Sheyenne James	WAHLU Outdoor Youth Program	\$500.00	\$2,289.00
Sheyenne James	Bowdon Promotion Project	\$1,000.00	\$5,233.00
Sheyenne James	LaMoure Logan Bookmobile	\$1,000.00	\$140,548.00
Sheyenne James	North Country Trail Project	\$500.00	\$7,681.00
Sheyenne James	Adrian Park Restoration Project	\$1,260.00	\$20,000.00
Sheyenne James	Foster Ladies Ag Night	\$500.00	\$1,204.00
Sheyenne James	James River Ladies Ag Night	\$500.00	\$5,030.00
Sheyenne James	Farm Rescue	\$1,000.00	\$64,285.00
	Total	\$43,695.00	\$2,273,629.00

Chairman Larsen and members of the Senate Ag Committee, my name is Representative Patrick Hatlestad, District One, Williston. I stand before you as a member of the Williston RC & D Council. Our local RC & D and its programs have been seriously disrupted as a result of the actions of the NRCS state conservationist. Promises made have not been kept. There has been a disruption of programs that have worked well in our area for years. Some have been put on hold or seriously interfered with by complicated procedures that are not necessary and are interfering with the actions of the local RC&D. Local decision making is the critical component to the success of our programs.

Our council works extremely well with the Tri-county Regional Economic Development Council and the coordination between programs is outstanding. With the cooperation of the two groups and the communities we serve, good programs have been turned into excellent programs. Although each program can stand on its own merits and do well, it is true that "two heads are better than one".

In closing I want to emphasize community response and involvement have been excellent and I feel good local leadership, good local people and good local decision making are the critical components to the success of this program. Please support the resolution and allow good things to continue.

Mr. Chairman, committee members, Thank you for the opportunity to speak before your committee.

#4

Date: March 10, 2011

To: Sen. Tim Flakoll
Members of the Senate Ag Committee

From: ✓ Paul Overby (Contact Information below)

RE: Request Do Not Pass on HCR3027

This morning you will hear testimony on HCR3027 which seeks to have the N.D. State Legislature declare a vote of "no confidence" in North Dakota NRCS State Conservationist Paul Sweeny due to some policy disagreements between him and some, but not all, of the state's eight Resource Conservation and Development Councils.

I am a farmer from Welford, ND and a supervisor for the Rolette County Soil Conservation District. I also serve as the SCD's representative to the Northern Plains RC&D Council. I volunteer to serve on them because I believe in what these organizations do for ND farmers and communities, and because I enjoy the opportunity to work with others who have similar beliefs.

The incredible irony in this resolution is that as it is being debated, the national RC&D Council program is in a fight for funding through the NRCS 2011 Fiscal Year Budget. As you are aware, the U.S. Congress can't seem to get its fiscal house in order and is financing agencies using continuing resolutions. At this time the House Budget has cut all funding for RC&D Councils. The Democrat version of the Senate Budget including a 50% level of funding. So all of the dollar amounts in this resolution are speculious at best!

I am incredibly disappointed in this resolution. And disappointed it made it to your Chamber!

Let me give you some background. The disagreements between Mr. Sweeny and the RC&D Councils revolve around internal policy disputes regarding office space and rent for a couple of Councils, and also use of grant dollars, both of which are provided to RC&D Councils by NRCS funds, which Mr. Sweeney administers. Councils were concerned, and a couple of them upset, by the decision of the State Conservationist to change the way "we had always done things."

I was part of a meeting with Mr. Sweeny on November 23, 2010 where members of several Councils met with him to express those concerns. After listening to us, Mr. Sweeny agreed to amend his decision on distribution of the grant dollars that are referred to in this resolution. ND RC&D Council President Jim Schmidt was directed by the group to continue working with Mr. Sweeny on the issues of concern so they could be resolved.

Instead of working towards resolution, letters and emails with accusations started flying around! Apparently a conference call of Council Presidents was convened in January where Mr. Schmidt discerned that he needed to introduce HCR3027. This resolution is just the wrong way to go about dealing with those disagreements. Rather, it may prove to be an embarrassment to our RC&D Councils, damage the working relationship we have with Mr. Sweeny, and needlessly impugn his personal and professional integrity. And it is hardly helpful in the goal of securing ongoing federal dollars for North Dakota's RC&D Councils.

In a phone conversation with Rep. Jim Schmidt, he insists he is pursuing this at the behest of 7 of 8 RC&D Council Presidents. I can assure you that the Northern Plains RC&D Council has never passed a motion supporting HCR3027. We met on January 24th and it was never brought to the meeting. After a few phone calls, I am not sure just which RC&D Councils, not just a president or officer, have in fact read this resolution as it written, had a meeting and discussion, and then taken a vote of support of it.

Mr. Sweeny has visited with our RC&D Council at a meeting to listen to our concerns and discuss his goals for the ND RC&D Councils, and to give us suggested directions to pursue. He also had a follow up meeting with our Council President and a couple of other members. From discussions held with Council members in other states, Mr. Sweeny has been quite a champion of RC&D Councils through the years!

I did some research on NRCS operations in ND. Did you know that NRCS Conservationist Mr. Sweeny oversees about 302 employees in all categories of positions (permanent and temporary)? Eight of those employees are assigned to work with our RC&D Councils. In addition they have started a new recruitment effort at NDSU, DSU, BSC, UMary and Crookston and have a crop of about 16 new student interns that will be reporting to duty around the state this summer. That is a key part of finding good jobs for our young people and keeping them in our state.

Mr. Sweeny oversees an NRCS budget of over \$100 million. Because Federal agencies are operating under a Continuing Resolution, here are the final budget numbers from Fiscal Year 2010:

For FY 10 *technical* assistance (operating costs such as salaries, rent, computers, fleet, equipment, supplies, etc.) was \$30,917,486.

For FY 10 *financial* assistance (funds to program participants such as EQUIP, WSP, WHIP, and CSP) was **\$86,761,486**. That is funding that goes primarily to farmers in the state!

Just for some perspective, while our RC&D Councils do some excellent things in ND, the Councils' piece of the NRCS budget for the state, at about \$1 million, is less than 1% of the total annual NRCS expenditures!

Do you really think it is appropriate to ask the ND State Legislature, on behalf of the citizens of North Dakota, to declare "no confidence" in the head of a Federal Agency that is so critical to conservation efforts in ND, and to the income of so many farmers, over an internal policy dispute regarding a couple of RC&D Councils.

Please give HCR3027 a Do Not Pass recommendation from the Senate Ag Committee.

Paul E. Overby
Lee Farms
5237 78th Street
Wolford, ND 58385
lffpc@utma.com
701-656-3654
701-351-0913

#5

Doug Graupe

From: "Doug Graupe" <dcgraupe@nccray.com>
Date: Wednesday, March 09, 2011 10:01 AM
To: "Tim Flakoll" <tflakoll@nd.gov>; "Joan Heckaman" <jheckaman@nd.gov>; "Jerry Klein" <jklein@nd.gov>; "Oley Larsen" <olarsen@nd.gov>; "Larry Luick" <lluick@nd.gov>; "Joe Miller" <joetmiller@nd.gov>; "Phil Murphy" <pmurphy@nd.gov>
Subject: Ag Committee hearing on Resolution

Dear Members of the Ag Committee

Thursday morning I understand you will be holding a hearing on the resolution from the House in regard to the State Conservationist.

✓
My name is Doug Graupe and I am a Divide County Commissioner. I have served in that capacity for 28 years. I am also a member of the Williston Basin RC&D council serving as it's President. I am writing in support of the Resolution and I will state my reasons why:

1. Mr. Sweeney proposed ending our Cooperative agreements and replacing them with competitive grants. We have worked many years through our State Association to have our Support and Stimulation be equal to each of the eight councils in the State of North Dakota. This has worked well and the local board members are able to make decisions that work best for their area. I asked our secretary to go back 20 years and all of the previous State Conservations have allowed our local Council to make the decisions based on the Federal Guidelines. Changing this policy would place the decision making in the hands of a federal bureaucrat. Our board members feel that they would no longer be needed.

2. Williston Basin RC&D shares office space with the Tri-County Regional Council. Tri-County Regional Council has spent \$80,000 to update the building to meet ADA requirements. This has worked so well in the past as our Coordinator and the Executive Director of Tri-County share ideas. This helps both organizations. It saves Williston Basin RC&D money as the rent is cheap and we use Tri-Counties Secretary when necessary. Mr. Sweeney last fall stated he was going to move our Coordinator. After confronting him last November 23 and again January 27 he has put that on hold. I haven't heard him say that we can stay in our office permanently.

I plan to be in Bismarck and attend the hearing. If you have any questions I will try to answer them. Thank you

Doug Graupe
Crosby, ND

#16

Good Morning Senators

My Name is Duane Uelacher, I am President of Dakota West RCTD Council located in Dickinson.

I am in Support of House Concurrent Resolution No. 3027 for Several reasons.

- ① The Cooperative Agreements we have had gave us funding at the level of 10,000 per Council, ~~not not~~ This funding was used for projects related to community development as well as Resource + Conservation projects
- ② It also gave our council the local control of how this money was spent in our 8 county area.
- ③ It also was equal funding to all 8 Councils. This worked well because councils worked together on projects that affected more than one Council area.
- ④

~~If we have to go to~~

If we lose our cooperation agreement we lose ① local decision making

② dollars for projects

③ lose the need for councils

We have 8 councils in the state
with about 20-25 members on each council.
That means we have about 175 volunteers
that take this money and find projects
within the council area ^{and} generate about
\$5 for every \$1 we receive.

In our council due to the uncertainty
of this funding we lost our office staff
person. And ^{our} council is concerned that
if we don't have a cooperative agreement.

What's the need for councils if we
have Top down decision making.