

Testimony by Bill Ongstad, Wells County Director
Garrison Diversion Conservancy District

To the

Water-Related Topics Overview Committee

Bismarck, North Dakota
October 9, 2012

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee; my name is Bill Ongstad, and I serve as a director for the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District representing Wells County. I also serve as board member for Farm Credit Services of North Dakota. I am here to urge you to remove the sunset clause from HB1318.

Irrigation development brings value to the state of North Dakota. Land values increase, risk decreases, crop production increases, and the economic impact is tremendous. When looking at the yearly economic impact of irrigated crops versus dryland crops, dryland wheat runs approximately \$885 per acre, compared to irrigated corn at \$3,970 per acre. The numbers speak for themselves; overall, irrigation development is beneficial for North Dakota.

When issuing a revenue bond for the first phase of the McClusky Canal Irrigation Project, the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District maximized their collateral on the bond, making it difficult to fund additional irrigation projects. The Special Assessment Authority would allow the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District to continue to assist farmers in developing their irrigation projects by assessing participants' land in order to fund the central supply project. Only farmers who choose to participate in a project will be affected.

The Special Assessment Authority is set to sunset in 2013. I support the removal of the sunset clause, as the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District continues to work with farmers as they develop irrigation projects that would benefit from the Special Assessment Authority.

Thank you for allowing my testimony to be heard today.