

Chairman Headland and Members of the House Finance and Taxation Committee,

My name is Elton Tufte, I am a resident of West Fargo and own property within the city limits of West Fargo. Since moving to here, from Sioux Falls SD in 2017, special assessments have been a much talked about topic among property owners. Most agree the issues of concern are a lack of timely communication of information and the lack of transparency in the way districts are created as well as how the benefits and assessments are determined. The suggested changes in the processes will hopefully create a level of trust in the way the overall assessment process work.

I have been involved in a couple of Districts where assessments were levied against my property. I am certainly not opposed to paying Special Assessments when there is a benefit to be realized. There were homes in my development that were proven to receive no benefit, and yet received rather substantial assessments only because they were in the District.

Given more transparency and more timely sharing of information, discussions could have been had early in the process and likely adjustments could have been made before the assessments were in front of the commission and on track to be approved. Many property owners get a last minute surprise when they see a newspaper notice of a Special Assessment levied against their property with no prior knowledge of a need, benefit or cost of the project. Providing property owners with early knowledge of projects, including details, would allow the opportunity for them to understand the details and possibly share information early in the project that would lead to discussions about concerns/errors that could be addressed or further explained.

In order to respect your time, I will refrain from sharing redundant information and just say, I have read the testimony from Roben Anderson and I am in agreement with his statements in support of the changes and improvements to the process.

Please vote to support HB 1381.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to the citizens of North Dakota.

Respectfully,
Elton Tufte