

Good Morning Chairman Headland and members of the House Finance and Taxation Committee!

My name is Austen Schauer, a representative from West Fargo, District 13.

***Special Assessment*** legislation can be a battle as I'm sure you know.

There have been plenty of questions and disagreements from residents when it comes to Specials and Special Assessment Districts.

No bill will fix that.

However, it is our belief that ***this*** bill, House Bill 1381, will ***help*** by focusing on **transparency** and **communication** between leaders of cities and counties and the people they serve.

To the bill.

On page 1, lines 21 to 23, we have added:

***“An engineer’s report under this section also must include information describing how the special assessment district was created including any considerations as to which properties are determined to receive a benefit from the proposed improvement.”***

One of the great frustrations for homeowners (as well as commercial property owners) is the lack of information on the basic questions of ***how the district was created and who will it benefit?***

This is not meant to open the “***pandora box***” of criticism, but at the same time, if a taxpayer is included in a Special Assessment District, they ***should be given*** an explanation.

On page 2, line 3, it says, **“Any notice under this section must be published on the city’s website.**

Further down on lines 7 to 9, it has been changed to say:

**“The city auditor shall cause the assessment list, which may not include the amount each lot, tract, or parcel is benefited by the improvement, to be published on the municipality’s website and once each week...”** etc.

This gives the City Auditor and city leaders flexibility on whether they want to make public the amount each parcel of property benefits by city-imposed improvements.

That’s it in a nutshell.

Again, the intent of **House Bill 1381**, is *transparency* and *communication*.

You will be hearing from **Roben Anderson**, a constituent in West Fargo who has been serving diligently on the city’s Special Assessment Task Force.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will stand for any questions.