

SB 2249

Senator Joan Heckaman

Chairman and Members of the Committee: For the record, I am Senator Joan Heckaman from New Rockford and I serve District 23. I am pleased Sen. Heitkamp invited me to join in sponsoring SB 2249 relating to the state Disaster Relief Fund.

The Disaster Relief Fund receives a portion of funding from a direct appropriation from the legislature. This fund provides the state share of presidential declared disasters. The funds can also be used for costs associated with a wide-area search and rescue. Recent Presidential Disasters were declared for excess rain/moisture.

All funds in this account are subject to approval of expenditures by the Legislative Assembly, the Emergency Commission, and the Budget Section. We get updates from Brady Larson at Legislative Council. I have attached a couple of pages from the December and January reports.

Current statutory authority provides \$15 million per biennium. This was reduced I believe last session from \$20 million. This money is channeled into the Disaster Fund from the state's share of the oil and gas gross production and extraction taxes. The bill before you restores the fund to the \$20 million level. There is also a request to OMB for a deficiency payment to shore up this fund.

North Dakota is a "Managing State" which means the Division of Homeland Security assumes the disaster program management responsibilities and coordinates with FEMA on projects. In my research, I found that the funds are distributed on a 75%/25% basis with the majority coming from the Feds and the 25% share coming from state and local funds.

Online, the fund is listed as having a balance of \$20.2 Million on December 1, 2020. I have been in touch with Cody Schulz from Disaster Emergency Services and I would be appreciative if he could come forward and add information for the committee. I believe he would have information that would help this committee make its decision.

Chairman, that completes my testimony.

