

HB 1452 – Testimony by Dustin Gawrylow (Lobbyist #266) North Dakota Watchdog Network

This session, there are several bills that are designed to help create a soft-landing or manage the decline of the coal-fired electrical power industry.

While it is perfectly understandable as to why there is a desire to slow the obsolescence of legacy energy technologies, it is important to remember that not only is North Dakota fighting the federal government's incentive programs regarding alternative energy sources, but that the free market itself is pushing away from fossil fuels.

House Bill 1452's headline reads "Clean Sustainable Energy Authority" but the members on the governance board of this new expansion of government are mostly representatives of existing energy sources. It does not take a very big leap to realize that this is going to be a new government program designed to offer protectionist policies and support for older industries.

To cite a specific problem with the premise of this bill, it bill is extremely open ended and grants the Industrial Commission vast powers on Page 4 Line 15:

"The commission may acquire, purchase, hold, use, lease, license, sell, transfer, or dispose of any interest in an asset necessary for clean sustainable energy technology development to facilitate the production, transportation, distribution, or delivery of clean energy commodities produced in the state as a purchases of last resort."

From what I can tell, this means the Industrial Commission is authorized to bail out and acquire anything it deems relevant to "clean energy". Does the legislature really want to let the Industrial Commission start buying up companies, facilities, or equipment? I doubt it.

This bill is an open-ended bailout masquerading as a clean energy bill.

Let's not spend millions of dollars and expand government this way.

Instead of trying to slow the inevitable, and spend a lot of the taxpayer's money to do it, North Dakota should actively seek to find ways to prepare its workforce for the changes that will be coming.

The people of North Dakota and the workers in the energy industry deserve to hear the truth.

This \$25 million expansion of government should be focused on preparing North Dakota for the changes that are coming. And we should do it before the extreme environmentalists force it to happen artificially at the federal level.

The people who work in the energy industry need leaders who will pave the way to future, not try to build a wall to keep the future at bay.

I urge a DO NOT PASS on this bill and any other idea this session that seeks to create a protectionist bailout system for any industry.