

TESTIMONY OF

Diana Trussell, Solid Waste Program Manager

Good morning Chairman Ruby and members of the House Transportation Committee. My name is Diana Trussell and I am the Solid Waste Program Manager of the Department of Environmental Quality. I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 2098.

The changes to NDCC Sections 23.1-15-05 and 07 through 09 were submitted at the request of the Highway Patrol through collaboration with the Department of Environmental Quality. I will be addressing the proposed amendments to NDCC Sections 23.1-15-07 through 09. Major Hummel from the Highway Patrol addressed the amendments to NDCC Section 23.1-15-05.

The amendment requested in **Section 2** clarifies the language in 23.1-15-07 subsection 1 by adding "of transportation" to "department." The reference pertains to the titling and ownership of the vehicle. Our agency does not title vehicles.

The amendments requested in **Sections 3 and 4** would allow commercial towing services, which are also licensed scrap iron processors, to be eligible for reimbursement of towing costs and up to thirty days of storage charges that resulted from taking an abandoned motor vehicle into custody. The reimbursement would be from the Abandoned Motor Vehicle Fund (202), which is administered by our agency's Solid Waste Program. For the 2019 – 2021 biennium, a total of \$250,000 was appropriated. Projects have been completed in the City of Dodge, City of Glen Ullin, Slope County and Williams County this biennium. As of now, approximately \$80,000 is remaining for grants for this biennium and our agency believes there is sufficient funding to support this use of additional funds to reimburse commercial towing services. As part of the Department's appropriation bill for the 2021 – 2023 biennium, the same amount of \$250,000 was requested. In addition, the Solid Waste Program licenses the scrap iron processors. Applying to become a licensed scrap iron processor is free and easy to do. A vehicle that is truly abandoned and where no owner is found has little if any value. If that vehicle is left exposed to the elements for years, environmental issues could occur such as leaking fluids contaminating the soil and water. Our agency's mission is to conserve and protect the quality of North Dakota's air, land and water resources following the science and the law. The proposed amendment supports this and our agency supports the additional use of funds from the Abandoned Motor Vehicle Fund as it will ensure that abandoned vehicles continue to be removed from the roadways and recycled and/or disposed of properly.

Mr. Chairman and committee members, this concludes my testimony. I ask for your support for Senate Bill 2098 with the requested amendments. I would be happy to answer any questions.