

Members of the 68th Legislative Assembly House IBL Committee

For the record I am Ken Wangen Fire Chief of Carrington Fire and Rescue and President of the North Dakota Fire Chiefs Association. I submit my support for SB 2211

100% Ongoing Continued appropriations of the IPT.

Fire Departments face budget issues outside of simply paying the light bill, insurances (building, equipment, WSI and supplemental) and building upkeep.

Turnout gear: \$12,000 to outfit a single fire fighter on a 10-year cycle

Truck certification and maintenance: \$2,000-3000 per Engine/Pumper a year

Hose: \$18,000 per truck replaced as needed due to damage or failure

Truck replacement: greater than \$600,000 for a new truck or if you are lucky and find one minimum of \$300,000 for a decent used truck less than 10 years old. These estimated do not include equipment

Training: Per ISO we are required to average 12 hours minimum of structure fire training per fire fighter. Average cost to attend state fire school is just under \$600 for 1 Fire Fighter.

Our incomes are as varied as can be but rest assured, we do get local skin in the game. 100% return of the IPT will help tremendously. Not having to return every 2 years to defend a tax that originated in 1887 would just make sense, also please take into consideration unless the Chief is paid, the time to come to these hearings is donated. Also note that from 1997-2021 around \$40,000,000 generated by this tax was not disbursed back to the fire service but put in the General Fund.

NDFA funded through the Insurance Regulatory Trust Fund

The funding of the NDFA has always been an issue between the Full-Time departments and.... well, the roughly 360 other departments. NDFA is well described in the Century Code as the training entity for the state of North Dakota, but it is not funded. Removing the NDFA budget from the Insurance Premium Tax Distribution Fund and placing it in the Insurance Regulatory Trust Fund will offer both a chance for the NDFA to grow where needed and provide oversight and quarterly accountability through the Fire Marshall and Tax Commissioner while still maintaining our grass roots firefighter lead training and programs. It would also move funds back to Fire Departments where the tax was generated.

Fire Marshall under the Tax Commissioner

On average I see the Fire Marshall 3 to 4 times more a year for Insurance related issues then Investigations for a cause of a fire, and even then, 1 out of every 5 may have a criminal element. Conversely, they help with preconstruction code identification and post construction enforcement. They inspect all school, daycares, and governmental buildings yearly because we do not have the expertise or frankly the time off from our full-time jobs. Other projects we work with them on is Fire Prevention programs, hazard identification, building condemnation and infrastructure planning. Allowing the move to the Insurance Commissioner's office will allow better synergies and growth in this office and end 40 years of stagnation.

Please pass SB 2211

Ken Wangen

Fire Chief Carrington Fire and Rescue/President North Dakota Fire Chiefs Association