

Testimony of Brandon Bochenski, Grand Forks Mayor
Senate Bill 2020
Senate Appropriations Committee – Education & Environment Division
Bismarck, North Dakota – January 19, 2023

Chairman Sorvaag and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee Education and Environment Division. I am here in support of funding for the Red River Valley Water Supply Project funding in Senate Bill 2020, in the Department of Water Resources budget.

The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District and Lake Agassiz Water Authority (LAWA) are cosponsors of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWS). Grand Forks is a large end user of the project and is also a member of LAWA. The Red River Valley Water Supply Project will mitigate the effects of moderate and severe droughts for the City of Grand Forks and for many North Dakota communities and rural water systems in central and eastern North Dakota. While we can't predict future drought severity and length, it is inevitable that we will find ourselves in an extended drought that would exhaust our river flows as it has in the past. Having a consistent source of water through the RRVWS project is crucial to growing both population and industry.

Garrison Diversion and Lake Agassiz are requesting \$255 million dollars to ensure a timely completion of the Project over an 8-year construction schedule. Compressing the timeframe will lower the cost for users by reducing inflationary pressures and increasing economies of scale. This lower cost would pass through not only to the State of North Dakota, but also the end users, which could allow for more water systems to participate. Allowing various components of the project to have less time lag between completion dates would further align useful life expectancies of the many phases of the project. The final benefit of a compressed timeframe is incalculable, as it removes several years of risk by providing the finished product and water security sooner.

Approving a commitment from the State to complete the project and provide \$255 million this biennium will allow the Project to move forward immediately and leverage an additional \$85 million in local funding for a total of \$340 million of shovel-ready construction and design work.

Thank you, Chairman Sorvaag and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee Education and Environment Division for listening to my testimony.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'B. Bochenski', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Brandon Bochenski
Mayor of Grand Forks