

**Testimony of Bernie Dardis, West Fargo Mayor**  
**Senate Bill 2020**  
**Senate Appropriations Committee – Education & Environment Division**  
**Bismarck, North Dakota – January 19, 2023**

Good afternoon Chairman Sorvaag and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee Education and Environment Division. My name is Bernie Dardis and I am the Mayor and Commission President for the City of West Fargo. I am here to testify in support of the critical funding needed to move the Red River Valley Water Supply Project forward this biennium and to ensure the completion of the entire project in a timely manner.

Known as the “City on the Grow”, West Fargo is the fastest growing city in North Dakota. As of 2023 we have a population of more than 42,000 residents. As Mayor of West Fargo, I am obligated to ensure the City has access to an adequate water supply for our growing population. The City of West Fargo is part of a regional water system operated by the City of Fargo and includes multiple cities and rural systems in Cass County. Both Cities and greater Cass County will benefit from the supplemental and industrial water supply from the Red River Valley Water Supply Project.

In addition to safeguarding water for domestic use, access to industrial water from the Red River Valley Water Supply Project is needed as West Fargo endeavors to attract and diversify its economic opportunities. Continued economic development is an important aspect to West Fargo’s strategic efforts to relieve some of the property tax pressure off our residents.

The residents and businesses in West Fargo will contribute a good amount of the \$85 million in local cost-share that will be available upon approval of the RRVWSP request for \$255 million dollars to provide for long-term drought protection and resiliency for our City on the Grow.

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