

Support SB 2275

Senate Finance and Taxation Committee

January 24, 2023

Good morning, Chairman Kannianen and Committee members.

I am Larry Syverson from Mayville, I grow soybeans on my farm in Traill County, I am the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors for Roseville Township, and I am also the Executive Secretary of the North Dakota Township Officers Association. NDTOA represents nearly 6,000 Township Officers that serve in more than 1,100 dues paying member townships.

If and when the operation prairie dog, county and township infrastructure fund bucket fills, each township in non-oil counties receives some nine thousand dollars. In Roseville Township, for even a very light maintenance layer of gravel with pit run gravel, which costs us 12 dollars a yard spread, \$9,000 will only do about 4 miles. We have 48 miles, not all roads see heavy use but there are some that will need maintenance graveling every 2 to 3 years to keep them useable. We have to budget \$38,000 a year for blading and graveling. That \$38,000 doesn't allow for any graveling at the recommended rates it is all barely a maintenance level.

During the 20-21 biennium we were very hopeful that prairie dog would pay out for counties and townships. Of course we were sorely disappointed, the biennium ended with the fund empty and our chance to get a few miles improved to a more durable surface was lost. Once the surface is lost it takes a lot more to bring it back than it would have been to maintain it

NDTOA is currently holding its annual meeting and convention, yesterday we were discussing the pending legislation of this session. When SB 2275 came up the membership was very enthusiastic and hopeful that getting the SIIF bucket out of the way would allow prairie dog to be a more dependable source of funding for our transportation systems.

Last evening a spokesman for the Western Dakota Energy Association also talked about legislation mentioning that prairie dog pays non-oil counties and townships. But he went on to say that eleven counties in their association get less than five million dollars of oil and gas tax

distributions so their townships do not get any oil and gas payments. Those townships do not totally escape energy impacts but must face the expenses without the funding.

One time funding has been very helpful and is much appreciated, but the term “one-time” does not instill much of a sense of dependability. We are mostly farmers, and we certainly understand the volatility of commodity markets and realize that results can be disappointing. But we are hoping that moving the four hundred-million-dollar SIIF bucket out of the steam ahead of the county and township fund will help bring some stability to our funding.

Chairman Kannianen and Committee Members, that concludes my prepared testimony. On behalf of the membership of NDTOA, I ask that you give SB 2275 your favorable recommendation and I will try to answer any questions.