

Testimony of Senator Jeff Magrum
in favor of
SENATE BILL NO. 2251
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
January 26, 2023

Chairman Patten and members of the committee,

I sponsored SB 2251 because I heard from many landowners who have had developers coming onto their property to conduct surveys without permission. I understand that under recent decisions from our United States Supreme Court, this kind of pre-condemnation access is not constitutional. This bill makes changes to the existing survey law so that the law is constitutional, and it would require developers to get permission in order to access a landowner's property.

These surveys are significant because they can uncover things like endangered species habitat or other issues on a landowner's property against their will and over their objection. That is not right, and I ask you to vote do pass on this bill so we can fix the existing law.

Thank you,
Senator Jeff Magrum

ARTICLE I DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

Section 1. All individuals are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inalienable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty; acquiring, possessing and protecting property and reputation; pursuing and obtaining safety and happiness; and to keep and bear arms for the defense of their person, family, property, and the state, and for lawful hunting, recreational, and other lawful purposes, which shall not be infringed.

Section 2. All political power is inherent in the people. Government is instituted for the protection, security and benefit of the people, and they have a right to alter or reform the same whenever the public good may require.

Section 3. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference shall be forever guaranteed in this state, and no person shall be rendered incompetent to be a witness or juror on account of his opinion on matters of religious belief; but the liberty of conscience hereby secured shall not be so construed as to excuse acts of licentiousness, or justify practices inconsistent with the peace or safety of this state.

Section 4. Every man may freely write, speak and publish his opinions on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that privilege. In all civil and criminal trials for libel the truth may be given in evidence, and shall be a sufficient defense when the matter is published with good motives and for justifiable ends; and the jury shall have the same power of giving a general verdict as in other cases; and in all indictments or informations for libels the jury shall have the right to determine the law and the facts under the direction of the court as in other cases.

Section 5. The citizens have a right, in a peaceable manner, to assemble together for the common good, and to apply to those invested with the powers of government for the redress of grievances, or for other proper purposes, by petition, address or remonstrance.

Section 6. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, unless for the punishment of crime, shall ever be tolerated in this state.

Section 7. Every citizen of this state shall be free to obtain employment wherever possible, and any person, corporation, or agent thereof, maliciously interfering or hindering in any way, any citizen from obtaining or enjoying employment already obtained, from any other corporation or person, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor.

Section 8. The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated; and no warrant shall issue but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, particularly describing the place to be searched and the persons and things to be seized.

Section 9. All courts shall be open, and every man for any injury done him in his lands, goods, person or reputation shall have remedy by due process of law, and right and justice administered without sale, denial or delay. Suits may be brought against the state in such manner, in such courts, and in such cases, as the legislative assembly may, by law, direct.

Section 10. Until otherwise provided by law, no person shall, for a felony, be proceeded against criminally, otherwise than by indictment, except in cases arising in the land or naval

THE
REVISED CODES

OF THE
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
1895

TOGETHER WITH
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES AND OF THE
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
WITH THE AMENDMENTS THERETO

BY AUTHORITY OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

5. Roads, tunnels, ditches, flumes, pipes and dumping places for working mines; also outlets, natural or otherwise, for the flow, deposit or conduct of tailings or refuse matter from mines; also milldams.

6. By-roads leading from highways to residences and farms.

7. Telegraph and telephone lines.

8. Sewerage of any incorporated city, or of any village or town, whether incorporated or unincorporated, or of any settlement consisting of not less than ten families, or of any public buildings belonging to the state, or to any college or university.

9. Cemeteries and public parks.

§ 5957. What estate subject to be taken. The following is a classification of the estates and rights in lands subject to be taken for public use:

1. A fee simple, when taken for public buildings or grounds, or for permanent buildings, for reservoirs and dams and permanent flooding occasioned thereby, or for an outlet for a flow or a place for the deposit of debris or tailings of a mine.

2. An easement, when taken for any other use.

3. The right of entry upon and occupation of lands and the right to take therefrom such earth, gravel, stones, trees and timber as may be necessary for a public use.

§ 5958. What property may be taken. The private property which may be taken under this chapter includes:

1. All real property belonging to any person.

2. Lands belonging to this state; or to any county, incorporated city, village or town not appropriated to some public use.

3. Property appropriated to public use; but such property shall not be taken unless for a more necessary public use than that to which it has been already appropriated.

4. Franchises for toll roads, toll bridges, ferries and all other franchises; but such franchises shall not be taken unless for free highways, railroads or other more necessary public use.

5. All rights of way for any and all the purposes mentioned in section 5956 and any and all structures and improvements thereon and the lands, held or used in connection therewith shall be subject to be connected with, crossed or intersected by any other right of way or improvement or structure thereon. They shall also be subject to a limited use in common with the owner thereof when necessary; but such uses, crossings, intersections and connections shall be made in the manner most compatible with the greatest public benefit and the least private injury.

6. All classes of private property not enumerated may be taken for public use, when such taking is authorized by law.

§ 5959. What must appear before property taken. Before property can be taken it must appear:

1. That the use to which it is to be applied is a use authorized by law.

2. That the taking is necessary to such use.

3. If already appropriated to some public use, that the public use to which it is to be applied is a more necessary public use.

§ 5960. Entry for making surveys, etc. In all cases when land is required for public use the person or corporation, or his or its agents, in charge of such use may survey and locate the same; but it must be located in the manner which will be compatible with the greatest public benefit and the least private injury and subject to the

provisions of section 5964. Whoever may be in charge of such public use may enter upon the land and make examinations, surveys and maps thereof, and such entry shall constitute no cause of action in favor of the owner of the land except for injuries resulting from negligence, wantonness or malice.

§ 5961. Proceedings by civil action. All proceedings under this chapter must be prosecuted by civil action brought in the district court of the county in which the property, or some part thereof, is situated.

§ 5962. What complaint must contain. The complaint must contain:

1. The name of the corporation, association, commission or person in charge of the public use for which the property is sought, who must be styled plaintiff.
2. The names of all owners and claimants of the property, if known, or a statement that they are unknown, who must be styled defendants.
3. A statement of the right of the plaintiff.
4. If a right of way is sought, the complaint must show the location, general route and termini and must be accompanied with a map thereof so far as the same is involved in the action or proceeding.
5. A description of each piece of land sought to be taken and whether the same includes the whole or only a part of an entire parcel or tract. All parcels lying in the county and required for the same public use may be included in the same or separate proceedings, at the option of the plaintiff, but the court may consolidate or separate them to suit the convenience of parties.

§ 5963. Who may defend. All persons in occupation of, or having or claiming an interest in any of the property described in the complaint or in the damages for the taking thereof, though not named, may appear, plead and defend, each in respect to his own property or interest, or that claimed by him in like manner as if named in the complaint.

§ 5964. Power of court. The court shall have power:

1. To regulate and determine the place and manner of making connections and crossings, or of enjoying the common use mentioned in the fifth subdivision of section 5960.
2. To hear and determine all adverse or conflicting claims to the property sought to be condemned and to the damages therefor.
3. To determine the respective rights of different parties seeking condemnation of the same property.

§ 5965. Assessment of damages. The jury, or court or referee, if a jury is waived, must hear such legal testimony as may be offered by any of the parties to the proceedings and thereupon must ascertain and assess:

1. The value of the property sought to be condemned and all improvements thereon pertaining to the realty and of each and every separate estate or interest therein; if it consists of different parcels, the value of each parcel and each estate and interest therein shall be separately assessed.
2. If the property sought to be condemned constitutes only a part of a larger parcel, the damages which will accrue to the portion not sought to be condemned by reason of its severance from the portion sought to be condemned and the construction of the improvement in the manner proposed by the plaintiff.