



Testimony of Broc Lietz, Director of Finance
Fargo Park District
To Senate Finance and Taxation Committee
In Opposition to HB 1572
March 18, 2025

Chairperson Weber and Members of the Committee:

My name is Broc Lietz, I am the Director of Finance for the Fargo Park District, on behalf of the Fargo Park District, I am speaking in opposition to HB 1572 as written, specifically the Section 1 proposal of limiting park district general obligation bonding authority to 1% and up to \$15 million without a public vote.

The following concerns stem from the bill as presented:

- Park districts in the state are currently held to a more restrictive limitation for general obligation bonds than other political subdivisions. NDCC 21-03-04 spells out authority of “municipality’s” having a bonding limit of 5% of assessed valuation, while NDCC 21-03-07 spells out specific authority for park districts with a limit of 1% of assessed valuation.
- The bonding limitation of \$15 million does not address the increase in costs over time. The buying power of \$15 million upon effective date of this bill will be significantly diminished in future years, whereas the 1% of assessed valuation honors the ongoing growth in thriving communities throughout the state.
- HB 1572 today has a direct impact to the largest communities and park districts within those communities, effectively limiting the local control of five park districts and differentiating those districts from our peers throughout the state.
- The Fargo Park District has current G.O. bonding authority of nearly \$85 million, which is 1% of the \$8.5 billion of total tax assessed valuation in the City of Fargo. HB 1572 directly limits local control from the elected officials of the Fargo Park District from \$85 million to \$15 million.
- NDCC currently has accountability measures in place for G.O. bond issuance beyond the 1% limitation. Park districts must publish the intent to issue bonds, and the corresponding mill levy increase for debt service with a 60-day protest period in which citizens can protest the issuance.
- The Fargo Park District is not actively resistant to the need for property tax reform and potential caps proposed to limit taxing impact to the public. We simply would ask for equality of application as park districts throughout the state are currently held to a different standard than our other political subdivision partners.

State statute limitations aside, local governing officials always reserve the right to call for a vote of the public for taxing efforts. There are parameters in place that provide for public input without a public vote.

I ask for a DO NOT PASS recommendation on HB 1572 or amend the bill to a cap of \$30 million, thus allowing for increased flexibility and local control.