



WATER TOPICS OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Tuesday, September 12, 2023
Roughrider Room, State Capitol
Bismarck, North Dakota

Senator Ronald Sorvaag, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Senators Ronald Sorvaag, Larry Luick, Jeffery J. Magrum, Jim P. Roers; Representatives Mike Beltz, Jared Hagert, Donald W. Longmuir, Jon O. Nelson, Anna S. Novak, Jeremy Olson, Todd Porter, Matthew Ruby, Steve Swiontek

Members absent: Senators Michael Dwyer, David Hogue; Representatives Jorin Johnson, Bob Martinson

Others present: See [Appendix A](#)

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Mr. Austin Gunderson, Counsel, Legislative Council, presented memorandums entitled [Supplementary Rules of Operation and Procedure of the North Dakota Legislative Management](#) and [Water Topics Overview Committee Background Memorandum](#), which provided the interim committee rules, background, and study approaches for the committee.

Mr. Joel Paulsen, Executive Director, Metro Flood Diversion Authority, presented testimony ([Appendix B](#)) regarding the status of the FM Area Diversion Project. He noted:

- The diversion inlet structure is nearing completion with a completion date and red ribbon ceremony scheduled for October 27, 2023.
- The Wild Rice River structure is on schedule with a completion date scheduled for Fall of 2023.
- The FM Area Diversion Project is nationally recognized and has received several awards including the national academy of construction recognition of special achievement award, Americas P3 deal of the year from project finance international, and North America water deal of the year award from proximo.
- The FM Area Diversion Project is on budget with a completion date scheduled for Spring 2027.

Ms. Dani Quissell, Executive Vice President, North Dakota Water Users Association, and Executive Director, North Dakota Irrigation Association, presented testimony ([Appendix C](#)) regarding an overview of the North Dakota Water Users Association and North Dakota Irrigation Association. She noted:

- North Dakota Water Users Association is a statewide member organization dedicated to protecting, developing, and managing North Dakota's water resources.
- North Dakota Water Users Association consists of more than 150 members including local, statewide, and regional organizations in North Dakota and is governed by a 27-member board representing 9 geographic districts.
- North Dakota Irrigation Association is a statewide member association representing irrigators and dealers across the state.
- The two associations share policy goals and resolutions considered and approved by the associations every year at the Joint Water Convention.
- The 2023 Joint Water convention will be held at the Bismarck Hotel and Conference Center December 5-8, 2023.

Mr. David Ashley, Chairman, Souris River Joint Board, presented testimony ([Appendix D](#)) regarding an update on the Mouse River flood control project. He noted:

- The Mouse River flood control project has seen significant progress toward the completion of Minot Milestone 1.
- Of the \$76.1 million dollars appropriated during the 2023-25 biennium, the Souris River Joint Board will use \$66.35 million for the construction, design, and acquisition activities of the project and the City of Minot will use a balance of \$9.75 million for acquisitions within Minot's city limits.
- Upon completion, Minot Milestone 1 will remove approximately 60 percent of Minot Valley residents from the Federal Emergency Management Agency regulatory floodplain.
- The Mouse River flood control project completion date is scheduled for 2035.
- The Souris River Joint Board has shifted focus from MI-4, also known as the Maple Diversion, to Minot Milestone 2, as negotiations continue with Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Canadian Pacific Kansas City Limited railroad companies.

Ms. Andrea Travicek, Director, Department of Water Resources, presented testimony ([Appendix E](#)) regarding the activities of the Department of Water Resources. She noted:

- The Department of Water Resources is comprised of six divisions which include the administrative services division, atmospheric resources division, planning and education division, regulatory division, water appropriation division, and water development division.
- Major functions and responsibilities of the department include allocation of the state's waters, cost-share funding, dam safety, drainage and construction permits, floodplain and sovereign land management, water project development, and projects and programs, including the drought livestock program, North Dakota cloud modification project, and drought monitoring through pushing remote sensors (PRESENS).
- Water in North Dakota is expansive, consisting of roughly 60 million acre-feet of water stored within the major aquifers in North Dakota, over 7,000 river miles including the major rivers and tributaries, and a total of 873,000 acres encompassing seven of North Dakota's largest lakes and reservoirs.

Mr. Jason Zimmerman, Commissioner, State Water Commission, presented testimony ([Appendix F](#)) regarding the activities of the State Water Commission.

Mr. Eric Volk, Executive Director, Rural Water Systems Association, presented testimony ([Appendix G](#)) regarding an update on the rural water systems in the state. He noted:

- Rural water funding is necessary to allow residents in smaller communities and rural areas to receive a basic necessity of life for a reasonable price.
- Overall costs of projects have been increasing due to a lack of related materials, including pipes.
- Lack of contractors in rural areas of North Dakota is concerning.

Mr. Duane DeKrey, General Manager, Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, presented testimony ([Appendix H](#)) regarding the status of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project.

Mr. Matt Gardner, Executive Director, North Dakota League of Cities, presented testimony ([Appendix I](#)) regarding municipal water supply projects. He noted:

- North Dakota League of Cities was established in 2012 in Grand Forks, North Dakota.
- Challenges facing municipal water systems include a shortage of food grade CO₂, work force shortages, and the rising cost of materials, specifically pumps and variable frequency drives.
- Municipal water projects have increased in demand with 139 projects in 91 cities scheduled for the 2023-25 biennium.

Ms. Tami Madsen, Executive Director, Western Area Water Supply, presented testimony ([Appendix J](#)) regarding the status of the Western Area Water Supply Project.

Ms. Jen Murray, Manager and Chief Executive Officer, Southwest Water Authority, presented testimony ([Appendix K](#)) regarding the activities of the Southwest Water Authority. She noted:

- The Southwest Pipeline Project serves roughly 58,000 customers across 13 counties.
- There are 710 potential customers on a waiting list.
- The authority is funding projects to provide capacity for more than 120 subsequent customers who have committed to connecting.

No further business appearing, Chairman Sorvaag adjourned the meeting at 2:41 p.m.

Austin Gunderson
Counsel

ATTACH:11