

Testimony
House Bill 1390
Senate Agriculture Committee
March 10, 2017, 9 a.m.
North Dakota Department of Health

Good morning Chairman Luick and members of the Senate Agriculture Committee. My name is Karl Rockeman, and I am the director of the Division of Water Quality within the North Dakota Department of Health's Environmental Health Section. The Division of Water Quality protects and monitors our water resources to ensure the quality of surface and ground water for the public's use.

The Division of Water Quality does not object to the Legislative Management Study of the state's Nutrient Reduction Strategy included in Section 7 of this bill. Excessive nutrients adversely affect surface waters at the local, regional and national level with a majority of states taking positive actions to limit their impact. In North Dakota:

- Excessive nutrients lead to excessive algae growth and possibly harmful algal blooms (HABs) which can make surface waters unusable for recreation, fishing, or domestic and agricultural use.
- Control of nutrient pollution is a required part of the federal Clean Water Act. Failure to address it in some fashion could result in legal action, or federally imposed numeric nutrient criteria. A solution developed by our state's stakeholders to suit our unique conditions is preferred.
- Work on the Nutrient Reduction Strategy started in 2012 with a 24 member planning team representing a variety of stakeholder sectors, including industry and agriculture. The planning team met twice during the winter and spring of 2012-2013. In December 2013, a larger group of stakeholders was convened and included over 80 attendees from a diverse group. The stakeholders were also asked to participate in one of 5 different workgroups, representing agriculture, industry and municipalities that continued to find solutions in their areas of interest on specific parts of the strategy. Summaries of these meetings and the meeting materials are available on our website ndhealth.gov.
- The Department is currently drafting a document that will undergo additional public input and stakeholder involvement. Additional details will need to be provided by the various stakeholders, including innovative

solutions to reduce nutrient pollution to our surface waters from a variety of sources.

- Actions have been implemented or are now being proposed by Montana, South Dakota, Minnesota and Manitoba to address excess nutrients in surface water supplies that impact agricultural, municipal, recreational and industrial uses.

This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.