



State of
North Dakota
Office of the Governor

Doug Burgum
Governor

May 2, 2017

The Honorable Larry Bellew
Speaker of the House
North Dakota House of Representatives
State Capitol
Bismarck, ND 58505

Dear Speaker Bellew:

Pursuant to Article V, Section 9 of the North Dakota Constitution, I have vetoed the last sentence of paragraph 2, Section 5 and all of Section 27 of House Bill 1020, the appropriations bill for the State Water Commission.

The portion of Section 5 that reads: "subject to budget section approval and upon notification to the legislative management's water topics overview committee." is vetoed. This sentence requires the Commission to seek budget section approval before transferring funding between the projects identified under paragraph 1, Section 5.

In *Kelsch v. Jaeger*, the North Dakota Supreme Court concluded the legislature may not delegate legislative powers to a subset of its members. 641 N.W.2d 100 (ND 2002). If enacted, the vetoed portion of Section 5 will interfere with the duties and responsibilities of the State Water Commission as defined under North Dakota law. NDCC § 61-02-04.

Section 27 of House Bill 1020 requires the Commission budget for the 2019-2021 biennium comply with NDCC §§ 54-44.1-16 and include line items for salaries and wages, operating expenses, capital assets, project carryover, new projects "and any additional line items as determined necessary by the commission or office of management and budget." NDCC § 54-44.1-04.

While well intentioned, these requirements will impair the duties and responsibilities of the Commission. Many water projects fit into multiple line item categories. Certain projects proceed slowly, delayed by legal, environmental, cost share and other factors driven by outside parties. The simpler budgeting format previously adopted and approved by the legislature gives the Commission a flexible and efficient model from which to work and should be retained.

As Chair of the State Water Commission, I will ensure our governing board prioritizes public transparency of project expenditures through regular and detailed reporting.

Sincerely,


Doug Burgum
Governor