

## MINUTES

### **NORTH DAKOTA ATMOSPHERIC RESOURCE BOARD    DECEMBER 29, 1998**

A telephone conference call meeting of the Atmospheric Resource Board was called to order by Chairman William Geiger at 9:05 a.m. CST, Tuesday December 29, 1998. Members participating in the call were William Geiger, Judith DeWitz, James Haaland, Hattie Melvin, Joe Porten, Jay Sandstrom, Dale Frink representing David Sprynczynatyk, Gary Ness, and Steven Weber. Staff members present were Bruce Boe, Director; LeNor Dollinger, Business Manger; and Darin Langerud, Chief Meteorologist.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Joe Porten to approve the minutes of November 12, 1998, November 17, 1998, and November 18, 1998 meetings. Seconded by Hattie Melvin. Motion carried.

#### **HOUSE BILL - 1040**

Mr. Boe informed the Board of content and intent of HB-1040. He asked that the Board consider taking a position on the bill, so that staff will be able to cite this position if asked. Mr. Boe mentioned to the Board that a copy of the draft report prepared by Professor Larry Leistritz and Randy Sell at North Dakota State University has been received. This is an updated economic evaluation of the cloud seeding program for the period 1988 thru 1997, based on actual crop production in the state, on the 45% reduction in crop hail damage observed, and the projected increase in rain. That report concludes direct impact of hail reduction of \$34 million per year, and a direct impact of rainfall enhancement of \$52 million per year, for a total direct impact \$87 million per year, or \$14.52 per planted acre. The economic rollover is projected to result in a total additional business activity of \$267 million per year. The study concludes that addition tax revenue to the general fund would be \$5.1 million annually, while the cost of the program is only \$2.7 million. The program statewide, as it appears in the report, would generate double the revenue it would cost to run the program.

Mr. Sandstrom asked who was going to verbally support the bill at the hearings, and how staff thinks such a program could be put together in one year's time. Mr. Boe mentioned that Mr. Mike Dwyer, Executive Director of the Water Coalition, and Executive Secretary of the Water Modification Association, commented that he didn't think that this bill could pass because of the \$3.1 million cost.

Mr. Boe called Mr. Frank Wald, who formally was on the Appropriations Committee but now has been elected Speaker for the up coming session. Mr. Boe reported that Mr. Wald believes the legislature is probably going to have to strip \$20 to \$30 million from the governor's budget. Boe suggested that the Board might instead try to get the bill amended to a form which covers a smaller part of North Dakota.

Mr. Boe said he also had talked to Kent Olson, the Director of the North Dakota Professional Insurance Agents. Though Mr. Olson is enthusiastic about this and would like to see the Board pursue HB-1040. Mr. Olson knows the program has merit, but believes the big question is whether or not it has a realistic chance given the funding requirements. Mr. Sandstrom asked if there is anyone within the insurance industry itself who was prepared to support the program. Mr. Boe answered that he was not aware of anyone from the insurance industry that would be supporting this bill. Mr. Sandstrom then asked Mr. Frink if the Water Commission has taken a position on the bill. Mr. Frink replied that the Water Commission had not.

Mr. Jim Haaland suggested starting with the environmental impact studies and taking program expansion in segments. Mr. Frink stated the importance of the board testifying in supporting water modification in general. Ms. LeNor Dollinger brought it to the Board's attention HB-1040 was not introduced by the Atmospheric Resource Board, is not an agency bill, and it really isn't the Board's to do with what it wants to. It is a bill that was passed by the Legislative Council Interim Insurance and Health Care Committee. The staff is seeking direction from the Board regarding whether or not to support it.

Ms. Judith DeWitz said that the fact the bill came out of an interim committee says that there was some strong support, there were some people that saw the need for it, and it would seem foolish on the Board's part not to support the bill. Mrs. DeWitz feels the board should support HB-1040, and then see what the committee does with the money aspect. Ms. DeWitz commented that the Board needs to support its programs.

A motion was made by Judy DeWitz to support HB-1040. Seconded by Jay Sandstrom. The motion carried.

### **MEMBERSHIP DUES**

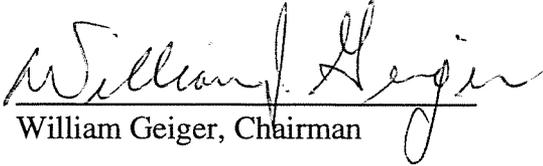
Mr. Boe informed the Board that the following memberships were due, the national Weather Modification Association for \$200; and North Dakota Water Coalition for \$1,000.

A motion was made by Jay Sandstrom to approve the payment of \$200 to the National Weather Modification Association and \$1,000 for the North Dakota Water Coalition. Seconded by Jim Haaland. Motion carried.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Bruce Boe noted to the Board members that the appropriations hearing for the State Water Commission and Atmospheric Resource Board has been scheduled for Wednesday January 20, 1999, at 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., (SB-2023).

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned 9:45a.m. CST.

  
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William Geiger, Chairman

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Hattie Melvin, Secretary

Date 3-3-99

Transcribed by Dawn Feist