

My name is Ward Koeser and I have served as the Mayor of Williston for the past eleven and one-half years. I am here today to give my support to the Red River Valley Water Supply Project which is essential to the future of our great state of North Dakota. With over 40% of the state's population now residing in the Valley, we need to consider how a severe drought in that region would impact the state as a whole. Over half of the state's sales and use tax collections are derived from the eastern 13 counties and a shortage of water there would have a drastic impact of the economy of our whole state. I believe that this aspect alone is a good reason for all North Dakotans to support this project.

We also need to note that the Missouri River is one of North Dakota's great resources, and we need to put it to use for the benefit of the entire state. This project is a supplemental water supply project and will only need water from the Missouri River during a drought. The impacts to the Missouri River will be minimal with less than one half of one percent of the flows needed, and that once again, only during a drought. Williston is blessed with a great supply of good water available from the Missouri which runs right past the city. I do not believe that the Red River Valley Water Supply Project will cause any problems for people in our region.

I would also like to point out that I feel that the GDU Import to the Sheyenne River would be the best solution for providing water to the Red River Valley. This alternative would meet the Valley's water needs now and in the future, and it provides the most positive environmental benefits.

I support the Red River Valley Water Supply Project and the state's preferred alternative. All North Dakotans need to work together to meet our state's challenges and take advantage of our opportunities. Thank you.

E. Ward Koeser  
 Mayor of Williston  
 1306 4<sup>th</sup> Ave East  
 Williston, ND 58801

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