

**SENATE BILL NO. 2116**

Introduced by

Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

(At the request of the Secretary of State)

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact section 10-15-01.1, a new subsection to section 10-15-36,  
2 a new subsection to section 10-15-54, and section 10-15-62 of the North Dakota Century Code,  
3 relating to legal recognition of electronic records and electronic signatures, exempting some  
4 information from open records laws, and fees for filing documents with the secretary of state;  
5 and to amend and reenact section 10-15-01 and subsection 1 of section 10-15-29 of the North  
6 Dakota Century Code, relating to definitions and officers of cooperative associations.

7 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

8 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 10-15-01 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
9 amended and reenacted as follows:

10 **10-15-01. Definitions.** As used in this chapter, unless the context requires otherwise,  
11 the term:

- 12 1. "Association" includes both cooperatives and foreign cooperatives.
- 13 2. "Cooperative" means an association incorporated under this chapter.
- 14 3. "Corporation" means all corporations not associations.
- 15 4. "Electronic" means relating to technology having electrical, digital, magnetic,  
16 wireless, optical, electromagnetic, or similar capabilities.
- 17 5. "Electronic communication" means any form of communication, not directly  
18 involving the physical transmission of paper that:
  - 19 a. Creates a record that may be retained, retrieved, and reviewed by a recipient  
20 of the communication; and
  - 21 b. May be directly reproduced in paper form by the recipient through an  
22 automated process.
- 23 6. "Electronic record" means a record created, generated, sent, communicated,  
24 received, or stored by electronic means.

- 1           7. "Electronic signature" means an electronic sound, symbol, or process attached to  
2           or logically associated with a record and executed or adopted by a person with the  
3           intent to sign the record.
- 4           8. "Filed with the secretary of state" means, except as otherwise permitted by law or  
5           rule:
- 6           a. That a document meeting the applicable requirements of this chapter together  
7           with the fees provided in section 10-15-54 was delivered or communicated to  
8           the secretary of state by a method or medium of communication acceptable  
9           by the secretary of state and was determined by the secretary of state to  
10           conform to law.
- 11           b. That the secretary of state shall then:
- 12                 (1) Record the actual date on which the document is filed, and if different,  
13                 the effective date of filing; and
- 14                 (2) Record the document in the office of the secretary of state.
- 15           9. "Foreign cooperative" means an association incorporated under a cooperative law  
16           of another state which has members residing within this state and which is  
17           operating on the following cooperative bases:
- 18           a. Either no member of the foreign cooperative who is an individual is allowed  
19           more than one vote because of the amount of stock or membership capital the  
20           member owns therein, or the foreign cooperative does not pay dividends on  
21           stock or membership capital in excess of eight percent per annum.
- 22           b. The foreign cooperative shall not deal in the products of or for nonmembers to  
23           an amount greater in value than such as are handled by it for members.
- 24           c. The foreign cooperative distributes its proceeds according to either the law  
25           governing cooperatives of this state or the law of the state of its incorporation.
- 26         ~~5.~~ 10. "Member" means a person who has been qualified and accepted for membership  
27           in an association.

28           **SECTION 2.** Section 10-15-01.1 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and  
29           enacted as follows:

30           **10-15-01.1. Legal recognition of electronic records and electronic signatures.** For  
31           purposes of this chapter:

- 1           1. A record or signature may not be denied legal effect or enforceability solely  
2           because it is in electronic form;
- 3           2. A contract may not be denied legal effect or enforceability solely because an  
4           electronic record was used in its formation;
- 5           3. If a provision requires a record to be in writing, then an electronic record satisfies  
6           the requirement; and
- 7           4. If a provision requires a signature, then an electronic signature satisfies the  
8           requirement.

9           **SECTION 3. AMENDMENT.** Subsection 1 of section 10-15-29 of the North Dakota  
10 Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

- 11           1. The principal officers of a cooperative are a president, one or more vice presidents  
12           and a treasurer as prescribed in the bylaws, and a secretary, ~~and a treasurer~~.  
13           They shall be elected annually by the board at such time and in such manner as  
14           the bylaws provide. Each principal officer except the secretary and the treasurer  
15           must be a director of the cooperative. The offices of secretary and treasurer may  
16           be combined in one person. If the bylaws provide, the board of directors may also  
17           elect from its number a chairman and one or more vice chairmen, in which case  
18           the president and vice presidents need not be directors or stockholders.

19           **SECTION 4.** A new subsection to section 10-15-36 of the North Dakota Century Code  
20 is created and enacted as follows:

- 21           Fees paid to the secretary of state according to subsections 4, 5, and 6 are not  
22           refundable if an annual report submitted to the secretary of state cannot be filed  
23           because it lacks information required by subsection 1 or lacks sufficient payment  
24           as required by subsections 4, 5, and 6.

25           **SECTION 5.** A new subsection to section 10-15-54 of the North Dakota Century Code  
26 is created and enacted as follows:

- 27           Any document submitted for approval before the actual time of submission for  
28           filing, one-half of the fee provided in this section for filing the document.

29           **SECTION 6.** Section 10-15-62 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and  
30 enacted as follows:

1           **10-15-62. Secretary of state - Confidential records.** Any social security number or  
2 federal tax identification number disclosed or contained in any document filed with the secretary  
3 of state under this chapter is confidential. The secretary of state shall delete or obscure any  
4 social security number or federal tax identification number before a copy of any document is  
5 released to the public.