

**Testimony of Dr. Timothy Mahoney, Chairman of Lake Agassiz Water Authority
House Appropriations Committee
Bismarck, North Dakota – November 9, 2021**

My name is Dr. Tim Mahoney, and I am the Chairman for the Lake Agassiz Water Authority (Lake Agassiz) and the Mayor of Fargo. Lake Agassiz and the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion) are cosponsors of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. I am testifying in support of our request for \$50 million in ARPA funds to complete shovel ready portions of the project, and to support the recently amended version of the Senate bill providing intent to direct ARPA funds to water supply, flood control and economic development. Project construction is steadily progressing and with the approval by the State Water Commission on October 14th; only \$1.9 million remain of the funds appropriated by the state legislature.

The Red River Valley Water Supply Project is a drought mitigation project that will deliver water from the Missouri River to central and eastern North Dakota via a buried pipeline, which will benefit over 30 water systems across central and eastern North Dakota. Lake Agassiz represents the local users in the Red River Valley Water Supply Project.

The statewide drought experienced in North Dakota this year reinforces the need to safeguard the water supply for nearly half of North Dakota's population. The State's economy would suffer a \$32 billion negative impact if a decade-long drought, such as the one experienced in the 1930s, would occur.

The project's continued progression is dependent on funding, which brings me to our request for \$50 million in ARPA funds. The \$50 million could be used immediately, as we have \$200 million of shovel-ready portions all set for construction. These funds would allow for additional pipeline construction.

Maintaining affordability is a key factor for participating water systems and cities. As users we agree that this project is critical, but are still concerned about our local share to participate. ARPA funds could make this project more affordable for participants, as ARPA funding can reduce the project's timeline and minimize inflation risks that threaten to price out small communities. Please consider appropriating \$50 million to the Red River Valley Water Supply Project.

Thank you, Chairman Delzer and members of the House Appropriations Committee, for the opportunity to provide testimony.