



**Testimony on behalf of the City of Williston Development Services Dept.
in Opposition to House Bill 1222
House Political Subdivisions Committee
January 25, 2021**

Chairman Klemin and members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee:

This is testimony in opposition to House Bill 1222 on behalf of the City of Williston Development Services Department.

The City of Williston Development Services Department has concerns regarding this bill.

This bill would remove the ability of cities to further development and zoning goals by allowing for non-conforming uses to be removed if they are destroyed beyond 50 percent.

For example, the City of Williston has a variety of areas that are not suitable for residential use or for habitation by individuals. These areas are located next to industrial zones and along federal and state highways. Over the years, the City has taken steps to ensure that those areas are transitioning to appropriate uses, including creating "transition zones". Non-conforming status helps to encourage those residences to turn over to appropriate uses as they come up for sale.

in some cases, the location of residences that are in non-conforming areas means that they have been disinvested in for years. In Williston, at least one residence that was beyond repair (no running water, no heat) in a light-industrial zone was required to be torn down after a violation occurred. Had the property been destroyed (which could easily have happened in a residence with no utilities), and had the property owner been able to rebuild on the property, they would have been re-building a residence into a light industrial area. That does not serve the resident, the neighborhood, or the city very well.

This bill would remove the ability for cities to make determinations about what is best for their community's goals.

We therefore respectfully request a DO NOT PASS recommendation for House Bill 1222.

Thank you for your time.