

2023 HOUSE TRANSPORTATION

HB 1246

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Transportation Committee
Room JW327E, State Capitol

HB 1246
1/19/2023

A bill relating to required traffic-control devices and to declare an emergency.

Chairman D. Ruby opened the hearing at 2:50 PM

Members present: Chairman Ruby, Vice Chairman Grueneich, Representatives Anderson, Christensen, Dyk, Frelich, Hauck, Koppelman, Murphy, Timmons, Wagner, Weisz, Dakane, Dobervich. No members absent.

Discussion Topics:

- Traffic-control device requirements
- Highway 1 stoplight concerns

Vice Chairman Grueneich verbally introduced the bill in support.

Senator Erbele, co-sponsor of the bill, verbally introduced the bill in support.

Drew Courtney, School Bus Driver and Oakes community member, testified in support (#13473).

Jaci Praska, Oakes Student Body President, virtually testified in support and provided student signatures in support of this bill (#13901, 14428, 14429, 14430, 14431).

Matt Linneman, Deputy Director of Engineering with the North Dakota Department of Transportation, testified in opposition (#14509).

Ron Henke, Director of North Dakota Department of Transportation, answered questions from the committee.

Matt Linneman continued answering questions from the committee.

Additional written testimony:

#14782, #14600, #14587, #13916, #14295, #14293, #13903, #13899, #13883, #13801, #13800, #13799, #13796, #13628, #13627, #13626, #13625, #13624, #13622, #13621, #13620, #13619, #13618, #13617, #13615, #13614, #13613, #13611, #13610, #13609, #13608, #13605, #13604, #13603, #13602, #13601, #13585, #13348, #13299, #13256, #13254, #13229, #13228, #13227

Chairman Ruby closed the hearing at 3:55 PM.

Mary Brucker, Committee Clerk

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Transportation Committee
Room JW327E, State Capitol

HB 1246
1/20/2023

A bill relating to required traffic-control devices and to declare an emergency.
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Chairman D. Ruby opened the meeting at 11:06AM.

Members present: Chairman Ruby, Vice Chairman Grueneich, Representatives Anderson, Christensen, Dyk, Frelich, Hauck, Koppelman, Murphy, Timmons, Wagner, Weisz, Dakane, Dobervich. No members absent.

Discussion Topics:

- Proposed amendment 23.0676.02001

Representative Koppelman distributed a proposed amendment 23.0676.02001 (#14782).

Representative Koppelman moved the amendment 23.0676.02001 and remove the emergency clause.

Representative Murphy seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Representatives	Vote
Representative Dan Ruby	Y
Representative Jim Grueneich	Y
Representative Karen A. Anderson	Y
Representative Cole Christensen	Y
Representative Hamida Dakane	Y
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	Y
Representative Scott Dyk	Y
Representative Kathy Frelich	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	Y
Representative Ben Koppelman	Y
Representative Eric James Murphy	Y
Representative Kelby Timmons	Y
Representative Scott Wagner	Y
Representative Robin Weisz	Y

Motion carried 14-0-0

Representative Koppelman moved a Do Pass as Amended.

Representative Christensen seconded the motion.

Representative Koppelman withdrew his motion for a Do Pass as Amended.

Representative Koppelman moved to further amend with removing “the” at the end of line 2 on page 2 and on line 4, page 2 removing “consent of” and replacing with “consulting with”.

Representative Weisz seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Representatives	Vote
Representative Dan Ruby	Y
Representative Jim Grueneich	Y
Representative Karen A. Anderson	Y
Representative Cole Christensen	Y
Representative Hamida Dakane	Y
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	Y
Representative Scott Dyk	Y
Representative Kathy Frelich	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	Y
Representative Ben Koppelman	Y
Representative Eric James Murphy	Y
Representative Kelby Timmons	Y
Representative Scott Wagner	Y
Representative Robin Weisz	Y

Motion carried 14-0-0.

Representative Koppelman moved a Do Pass as Amended.

Representative Christensen seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Representatives	Vote
Representative Dan Ruby	Y
Representative Jim Grueneich	Y
Representative Karen A. Anderson	Y
Representative Cole Christensen	Y
Representative Hamida Dakane	Y
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	Y
Representative Scott Dyk	Y
Representative Kathy Frelich	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	N
Representative Ben Koppelman	Y
Representative Eric James Murphy	Y
Representative Kelby Timmons	Y
Representative Scott Wagner	Y
Representative Robin Weisz	Y

House Transportation Committee
HB 1246
January 20, 2023
Page 3

Motion carried 13-1-0.

Representative Koppelman is the bill carrier.

Chairman D. Ruby adjourned the meeting adjourned at 11:45 AM

Mary Brucker, Committee Clerk

January 20, 2023

4
at 1-20-23

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1246

Page 1, line 2, remove "; and to declare an emergency"

Page 2, line 1, replace "device" with "signal"

Page 2, line 1, after "within" insert "the corporate limits of a city and within"

Page 2, line 2, after "a" insert "public or nonpublic elementary, middle, or high"

Page 2, line 2, remove "or licensed day care"

Page 2, line 2, remove "the consent"

Page 2, line 3, replace the first "of" with "consulting with"

Page 2, line 3, replace "political subdivision" with "city"

Page 2, line 4, replace "device" with "signal"

Page 2, line 4, after "for" insert "temporary"

Page 2, remove line 5

Renumber accordingly

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1246: Transportation Committee (Rep. D. Ruby, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS** and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (13 YEAS, 1 NAY, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1246 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

Page 1, line 2, remove "; and to declare an emergency"

Page 2, line 1, replace "device" with "signal"

Page 2, line 1, after "within" insert "the corporate limits of a city and within"

Page 2, line 2, after "a" insert "public or nonpublic elementary, middle, or high"

Page 2, line 2, remove "or licensed day care"

Page 2, line 2, remove "the consent"

Page 2, line 3, replace the first "of" with "consulting with"

Page 2, line 3, replace "political subdivision" with "city"

Page 2, line 4, replace "device" with "signal"

Page 2, line 4, after "for" insert "temporary"

Page 2, remove line 5

Renumber accordingly

2023 SENATE TRANSPORTATION

HB 1246

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Transportation Committee
Fort Totten Room, State Capitol

HB 1246
3/16/2023

Relating to required traffic-control devices.

9:00 AM Chairman Clemens opened hearing.

Senators Present: **Clemens, Conley, Rummel, Paulson, Larsen.**

Discussion Topics:

- Stop lights

9:01 AM Representative Grueneich introduced bill.

9:07 AM Matt Linneman, Deputy Director for Engineering for ND Department of Transportation, testified in favor. #25198

9:10 AM Chairman Clemens adjourned hearing.

Nathan Liesen, Committee Clerk

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Transportation Committee
Fort Totten Room, State Capitol

HB 1246
3/17/2023

Relating to required traffic-control devices.

10:02 AM Chairman Clemens opened the meeting.
Chairman Clemens, Senators Conley, Larsen, Paulson, Rummel were present.

Discussion Topics:

- Committee action
- Traffic control signs

10:08 AM Senator Conley moved Do Pass.

10:08 AM Senator D. Larsen seconded.

Roll call vote.

Senators	Vote
Senator David A. Clemens	Y
Senator Cole Conley	Y
Senator Doug Larsen	Y
Senator Bob Paulson	Y
Senator Dean Rummel	N

Passed 4-1-0

Senator Conley will carry the bill.

10:11 AM Ron Henke, Director, ND Department of Transportation (NDDOT), provided additional information verbally neutral.

10:12 AM Matt Linneman, Deputy Director, NDDOT, provided additional information verbally neutral.

10:17 AM Senator Clemens closed the meeting.

Nathan Liesen, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1246, as engrossed: Transportation Committee (Sen. Clemens, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (4 YEAS, 1 NAY, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). Engrossed HB 1246 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

TESTIMONY

HB 1246

Brucker, Mary

From: Grueneich, Jim
Sent: Friday, January 13, 2023 1:01 PM
To: Brucker, Mary
Subject: Fw: House Bill 1246

From: Brandon Bata <Brandon.Bata@k12.nd.us>
Sent: Friday, January 13, 2023 5:55 PM
To: Grueneich, Jim <jgrueneich@ndlegis.gov>
Subject: House Bill 1246

Dear Representative Grueneich,

I wanted to reach out to you regarding House Bill 1246—as this has a direct impact on my students, staff, family, and community.

Having a school next to a major highway is always a safety concern, however, having a stoplight to slow and stop traffic has been vital to ensure the highest degree of safety possible for everyone. Our school is the "center/hub" of the town and lies not only next to Highway 1, but also at the intersection of Main Street. These are the two most heavily traveled streets in our town.

Removing our one and only stoplight puts our students, staff, families, and community at greater risk for a tragedy. Without the stoplight, I fear for the safety of our students that are crossing the street before/after school, our HS students that leave for lunch, our parents that drop off/pickup their students, before/after school activities, our busses that transport our students, etc. We need to keep our stoplight.

As High School Principal and more importantly as a dad—I urge this bill to move forward to protect the most important thing we have in this world—our children.

Thank you for your time and dedication--Brandon

Brandon Bata
High School Principal
Oakes High School
701-742-3234

HB 1246

Brucker, Mary

From: Grueneich, Jim
Sent: Friday, January 13, 2023 12:59 PM
To: Brucker, Mary
Subject: Fw: KEEP Oakes Stoplight

From: Dinger, Danielle <danielle.dinger@ndsu.edu>
Sent: Friday, January 13, 2023 5:54 PM
To: Grueneich, Jim <jgrueneich@ndlegis.gov>
Subject: KEEP Oakes Stoplight

Good morning,

I am writing in reference to your upcoming meeting with the ND Legislature next Thursday.

I would like to HIGHLY recommend that we keep the one and only stoplight in Dickey County. The reasons for keeping the stoplight cannot be expressed loudly enough when we talk about the safety of our community especially youth. I am an Oakes resident and live with my 3 boys and husband near the Oakes Good Samaritan Center. My husband and I are both working adults which requires our young boys (9, 11, & 13) to stay home by themselves during the summer days. These boys are active in sports including baseball. The baseball practice is held at the Westside Baseball Complex 1+miles west of our house. The boys travel by bike together from one side of town to the other. If you drove through our town either before or after these baseball/softball practices you would see a mass exodus of boys and girls on bikes, on foot or on scooters. These youth all have working parents who cannot attend a daily practice in order to get them there safely. Most youth are encouraged to utilize that one stoplight to get them safely across Highway 1. As well, youth who live west of Highway 1 travel often either to the school or to the pool which is east of the highway. If you are looking for a child in Oakes during a hot summer day, you will most likely find them at the pool. What an awesome benefit that is for parents to have trained lifeguards and an activity (rather than videogames and devices) to offer our children during our working days! Without a safe opportunity for these kids to cross, what will become of the above opportunities?

Having stayed home with my boys until they were old enough, I have been the mom on the bike getting them there and back or otherwise moving through town needing to cross the highway. I have personally witnessed youth waiting at the light for their turn to cross. I have also personally witnessed and been a victim of motorists ignoring the under-utilized "Crosswalks" across HWY 1, the alternatives to the stoplight. Two crosswalks are along on HWY 1; one at the intersection of the school and the ambulance garage and one further north at the intersection of HWY 1 and FCCU, the credit union bank. As a young gal in SD, my parents always directed me to use the crosswalks as they are the safe places for kids to cross. I am not certain ND has different rules or regulations than SD but the idea that if a motorists sees a pedestrian in the crosswalk, that he must then stop and wait for them to cross, IS NOT FOLLOWED IN OAKES. I have been using the crosswalk while pushing a stroller with a small boy on his bike behind me when motorists buzz by us with annoyance having to swerve out of the way. I have stopped semi's with the wave of my arms as I wasn't sure they saw us using the crosswalk, they did not slow down enough to convince me they did. In fact, I called a semi operator's business to let them know just how their driver behaved with 3 young children in a crosswalk. I have witnessed youth trying to cross at the intersection/crosswalk by the school while vehicle after vehicle cruised through the crosswalk ignoring the young child trying to cross, trying to safely get to school. In fact, one such situation another frustrated driver got out of his vehicle, parking in the traffic lane and made the oncoming traffic stop in order to allow youth to cross. Is this not a law or does it fall under more of a courtesy?



Oakes Public School

804 Main Ave. Oakes, ND 58474
 Phone: (701) 742-3234 Fax: (701) 742-2812
www.oakes.k12.nd.us

January 12, 2023

Dear Committee Members:

We are reaching out to you today to ask your help in addressing a situation that is of grave concern to our school community. We recently became aware of a decision that we believe could have possible negative repercussions on the safety and well-being of our students. We hope that in your unique role, you will be able to offer us help in correcting this decision.

Oakes Public School is a school of approximately 500 students. Our school is located on the corner of Main Avenue and State Hwy 1. Currently, there is a stoplight located at this intersection with a 4-way crosswalk and pedestrian crossing buttons. This setup is essential for the safety of our children, as Hwy 1 is a state highway with truck traffic that is heavy during certain times and days of the year. Our children rely on the signal to safely cross this busy road.

We were recently made aware that the ND DOT has decided to remove the stoplight. They completed a study of the intersection this summer and found that the ratio of pedestrian to car crossings was lower than their required threshold. We are vehemently opposed to the removal of this light based on data as the data does not tell the whole story...the story that includes the safety of our children that attend a school located RIGHT on a busy intersection.

Oakes Public School, Oakes police department, and the Oakes City Council are opposed to this decision. We are hoping to gather help from those that we know care about the safety and well-being of our children. Thus, that is the reason this letter is being sent to you. Our hope is that you will give your approval to HB 1246 and ensure that this stoplight remains by our school for the duration.

Sincerely,

Anna Sell, Oakes Superintendent

Brucker, Mary

From: Grueneich, Jim
Sent: Friday, January 13, 2023 1:45 PM
To: Brucker, Mary
Subject: Fw: Oakes Stoplight testimony

From: Michelle Schroeder <mschroeder@drtel.com>
Sent: Friday, January 13, 2023 7:43 PM
To: Grueneich, Jim <jgrueneich@ndlegis.gov>
Subject: Oakes Stoplight testimony

Good afternoon,
I would like to submit my written personal testimony on why the Oakes Highway 1 stoplight is so important.

As a major highway through our community, I feel the stoplight needs to stay for the safety of drivers, students, pedestrians, and more. There are many times throughout the year when I have seen many using the crosswalk and depend on the stoplight to stop and/or slow down traffic. With the elevators on the south end of town, during harvest there are many loaded semis traveling through town...sometimes at increased speeds. Without the stoplight I'm afraid of what might happen....

Many students and daycares cross the highway at the stoplight throughout the year. Many are crossing to stay connected to the school and downtown businesses. Students are walking to various activities after school and are walking to school in the morning and need to cross the highway.

I grew up in this community and for as long as I can remember that stoplight has been there. I feel without it our community safety will be impacted. Please fight for us to keep our small-town stoplight.

Thank you for your service.
Michelle



Michelle Schroeder | Marketing Specialist

Phone: 701.344.6055 Main: 877.559.4692

E-mail: mschroeder@drtel.com

drnreaditech.coop | readitech.com



Brucker, Mary

From: Grueneich, Jim
Sent: Friday, January 13, 2023 2:02 PM
To: Brucker, Mary
Subject: Fw: Oakes Stop Light

From: Mike Ost <most@drtel.com>
Sent: Friday, January 13, 2023 8:01 PM
To: Grueneich, Jim <jgrueneich@ndlegis.gov>
Subject: Oakes Stop Light

Dear Mr. Grueneich,

In regards to the stop light on the intersection of Main and 7th st. It would only be a matter of time before someone would get struck by a vehicle if those stoplights were removed. I've watched that intersection on school day's when kids or going across the street to get lunch and they use the walk/don't signs all the time. Please keep the lights there.

Mike Ost

LINDSEY COURTNEY

9053 103 Ave SE, Oakes, ND 58474 | 701-290-7753 | lindseykcourtney@gmail.com

January 13, 2023

Dear Committee Members:

I am reaching out to you as a parent, former educator at Oakes Public School, and community member. I am writing today to voice my support for the passage of HB 1246 relating to traffic-controlled devices.

HB 1246 would prevent the only stoplight in the Oakes community from being removed. This stoplight causes traffic to stop at the intersection of ND HWY 1, a highway that is the main traffic route through our town and Main Avenue, the street providing access to the business hub of Oakes.

The removal of this stoplight would be detrimental to the safety and well-being our community members, mainly our children, the lively hood of any ND community. The Oakes Public School is located at stoplight intersection, students currently utilize the crosswalks and the pedestrian crossing buttons while waiting for busy traffic to stop. The pedestrian crossing provides a safe route for students to safely come and leave school, access a gas station for snacks, a bookstore for studying, and a multitude of other businesses located on our thriving Main Avenue. Additionally, located less than 500 ft from the stoplight is a daycare center, Tiny Tornadoes, and a preschool/daycare, Moving Mountains Learning Center. These childcare facilities travel across the highway, relying on the stoplight and pedestrian crossing to allow their safe passage on a very busy road to access local parks and the swimming pool. During the summer, the pedestrian crossing allows children, teens, and families to safely cross the road, via foot and bike, to access the softball complex on the west side of town and the pool on the east side of town.

As a teacher, I have waited with students and walked them across the street utilizing the crosswalk and stop light. I have also crossed ND HWY 1 with my students and my children, where only crosswalks are located. During these instances we often wait for extended periods of time

for speeding traffic to stop because there is no stoplight and pedestrian crossing to use anywhere else along the highway.

Whether driving to work at school, running errands in town, or taking a trip to the pool, there are always children waiting for traffic to stop and allow them to safely cross the road along ND HWY 1 and mainly at the stoplight and pedestrian crossing because of the safe route it supplies. Removal of the stoplight inhibits the safety of the beloved children in our community and provides ample opportunity for tragedy to strike our close-knit town. I urge you to give HB 1246 unanimous support for a do pass recommendation to ensure the removal of our stoplight does not happen and our children and community members can continue to safely access many amenities within Oakes. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Courtney

I am writing about HB1246 regarding the removal of the Oakes City stoplight. This bill's outcome will directly impact my children, my students, and my community. The traffic light is located next to the public school and is the number one reason that removing it could put the students and other citizens in our community at risk. Every day large amounts of traffic travel through Oakes utilizing this stoplight that acts as the hub of our town dividing Main Street and Highway 1. As Oakes is primarily an agricultural community, much of that traffic includes tractor-trailers hauling grain, cattle, and other commodities. In addition to vehicle traffic, there is also foot traffic utilizing the stoplight, especially during lunchtime when many students head uptown for lunch. Another aspect to consider is the elementary playground being a few 100 feet from this traffic light.

As a parent of students in this school district and a teacher in this district, I cannot stress enough the importance of keeping this traffic light to keep our community safe. Every day I witness the amount of traffic moving through this area along with the students that walk to and from school. I am fortunate to see the current traffic light doing its intended job- keeping citizens safe. The traffic light in place causes drivers to use more caution and slower speeds. However, if the traffic light is taken down this could change. I urge you to help move this bill forward to help protect the students and community of Oakes.

Sincerely,
Kayla Meierotto

January 16, 2023

Dear Chairman Ruby and members of the committee.

My name is Drew Courtney, and I am a substitute bus driver, farmer, dad, and active community member. I write this letter in support of HB1246.

As a substitute bus driver I am well aware of the great need for the stoplight to stay in its current location. When dropping students off in the morning and picking them up in the afternoon, there are large amounts of traffic going to work and generally accessing the business district, as well as additional parents dropping and picking up their students.

As a dad of 2 elementary students I understand how critically important it is for not only the safety of my children but all kids in school. Children use the pedestrian crossing buttons to access their parents place of work as the highway intersects the main business hub of Oakes. Students of all ages use the same crossing all summer to access a variety of amenities. Without the pedestrian crossing, I fear parents will limit their children's activities because of no longer being able to safely cross an extremely busy highway.

As a farmer I know of the large amount of semi traffic that travels through Oakes. Oakes is an agricultural powerhouse with onion warehouses, potato warehouses, a large fertilizer facility, and two 110 train loading elevators. After calling these facilities myself to get a rough estimate of trucks on a yearly basis, the number of semis traveling through town was approximately 48,000. I urge you to support HB1246 and support the safety and well being of our community!

Thank you Chairman Ruby and members of the committee.

Drew Courtney

Sonia Meehl
11103 85th St SE
Oakes, ND 58474-9752
Phone: 701-753-7431 Email: ismeehl@drtel.net

January 16, 2023

Chairman Ruby and Members of the ND House Transportation Committee:

I'm writing in support of HB 1246 and I thank the legislators that have sponsored this legislation that is so important to safety in our community.

I am a school board member at Oakes Public School. The four-way traffic light with crosswalk signals is on the corner of ND Highway 1 and Oakes Main Avenue and ***directly adjacent*** to the two blocks that contain our elementary and high school. Nearly 500 students, preschool through grade 12, plus around 50 staff use those buildings daily during the school year.

This intersection is the gateway to our business district. Nearly everyone who shops, dines, banks, goes to the post office, gets a haircut, or attends a medical appointment in Oakes will drive through this intersection. These drivers include (naturally) our youngest and least experienced drivers who are coming to and going home from school and activities, as well as older residents whose reaction time may be a bit slower than it was in their younger years.

Our community is home to two large grain elevator companies and our area farmers also produce potatoes and onions. A great deal of ag truck traffic moves through this intersection, at harvest time and throughout the year. As one of those truck drivers, I greatly appreciate being able to see the traffic light from several blocks away coming from either direction to plan whether I will need to stop or just proceed with extraordinary caution near the school, particularly at the busy times just before and after school.

This traffic light has served us well in the many years it has been in place. I appreciate your support of HB 1246 so that we can keep the signal in place and continue to enhance safety for everyone in our community.

Kindest regards,



Sonia Meehl

Dear Representative Grueneich:

I am a North Dakota resident living in Oakes. I'm the United Methodist pastor and I also work as a bus driver for the Oakes Public Schools.

I am writing in support of the bill coming before the Transportation Committee this Thursday (January 19th, 2023) regarding the maintenance of stop lights within short distances of schools.

My afternoon bus route goes north from Oakes through the intersection of Main Street and Highway One which has a stoplight for traffic control. I cannot count the number of times my bus is forced to stop at this intersection because one of our students is utilizing the traffic control device. I am often amazed, due to my position on the bus being so far above the street, how small many of our children look crossing the street. I can only imagine the difficulty of seeing elementary-age children if I was to drive a semi truck.

Another note to be made in support of this bill regarding the stop light in Oakes is that the main playground during the Summer for outdoor basketball is at our Oakes Elementary School. The nearest businesses in town offering refreshments like snacks, soda and ice cream following a game are across the noted intersection. I can't imagine a whole group of young people running across the street after play without the presence of traffic control like this stoplight.

Thank you for your work in support of this bill. If I can be of any further help, please contact me.

Sincerely

Rev Robert Moorlach

Mr. Gruenich: I have lived in the city of Oakes, ND since 1996. The traffic light which we have in our town is a needed feature. Highway 1 runs north and south, and this is one way to get the trucks to slow down. For anyone having trouble crossing the highway. with out the lights this would be a major obstacle. We have many people who walk, and ride bikes in the summer and without the lights making the traffic to slow down or stop would be almost impossible. Please reconsider leaving the stop light in place for the safety of our children in school and also during the summer. Also for the general public, this is a very important issue to the town of Oakes and I hope you will consider. Deb Van De Venter

Mr Grueneich

I am sending you this email to ask you to please make sure the stoplight at Main and Highway One in Oakes, ND is left operational. As a parent, resident and business owner in Oakes the safety of our children and all residents is our main concern. Taking this stop light out would put so many in danger so many times. Please keep this in mind when you vote on this matter. Thank you for your time.

Jonda Praska

I am writing to ask as a citizen of Oakes that you please vote to retain the one stoplight currently in our town. It is located adjacent to the elementary school and serves a very important purpose in slowing down truck and other traffic that comes through on Highway One. It is a busy highway and this light serves as the only point where traffic speeds are reduced as they pass through. Please work with us to protect our children at that school and all others who walk across the highway on a daily basis. Although the safety of all our citizens is a high priority for the hospital as well, I am asking this on a personal level.

Thank you,

Becki Thompson

DO NOT TAKE THE LIGHTS DOWN!!! The highway, truck traffic, children coming and going from school, would be a disaster, with those lights the traffic would not slow down for anything. thus causing who knows what.

Thank you

Tracie Zetocho

I am writing you to use your influence to persuade the ND Department of Transportation to reverse its decision to take the stoplight out of Oakes, ND. I am sure the Department counted traffic at the intersection of Highway 1 and Main Street and made its decision based on that. There are more elements that make the light necessary. Our school is on one corner and a large convenience/gas store is on the opposite corner. Many kids from the school visit the store both at the noon hour and after school every day. Taking the light out would definitely put those kids at risk. Two larger day care centers are also near the light and parents or caretakers stop at those centers at various hours daily to pick up and drop off the children. Many large semi truck/trailers go on Highway 1 through the light daily, particularly during harvest. I am sure the light will be replaced with a four-way stop, but that solution does not offer the same element of control and safety. Thank you for your consideration.

Ron and Mary Jo Goodman

I am writing about HB1246 regarding the removal of the Oakes City stoplight. This bill's outcome will directly impact my children, my students, and my community. The traffic light is located next to the public school and is the number one reason that removing it could put the students and other citizens in our community at risk. Every day large amounts of traffic travel through Oakes utilizing this stoplight that acts as the hub of our town dividing Main Street and Highway 1. As Oakes is primarily an agricultural community, much of that traffic includes tractor-trailers hauling grain, cattle, and other commodities. In addition to vehicle traffic, there is also foot traffic utilizing the stoplight, especially during lunchtime when many students head uptown for lunch. Another aspect to consider is the elementary playground being a few 100 feet from this traffic light.

As a parent of students in this school district and a teacher in this district, I cannot stress enough the importance of keeping this traffic light to keep our community safe. Every day I witness the amount of traffic moving through this area along with the students that walk to and from school. I am fortunate to see the current traffic light doing its intended job- keeping citizens safe. The traffic light in place causes drivers to use more caution and slower speeds. However, if the traffic light is taken down this could change. I urge you to help move this bill forward to help protect the students and community of Oakes.

Sincerely,
Kayla Meierotto

As a representative of our district I strongly urge you to fight for our most precious commodity, the children, and do everything you can to preserve our stop light on busy Highway 1 in Oakes. I know you are aware of all the reasons so I wont repeat them. I have faith in you.

Jennifer (Hokana) Knutson

Just wanted to take a moment to state how horrified I am that there's any consideration of removing the stoplight on Highway 1 in Oakes, ND.

The intersection being considered is right in the heart of our town of well over 2600 people (the 35th largest city by zip code) in ND and always extremely busy.

It's also right by our Elementary school and one of the playground entries. I cannot even count the times I've almost been hit at this intersection - more times on foot than I care to remember. And that's with the stop and pedestrian crossing lights.

In my opinion, it isn't even reasonable to remove the lights at all. We have many semi trucks that already go way too fast in this town and this will make it exponentially worse.

In closing, I will state If anyone we're to get killed (which it really is in my opinion a matter of when not if) at this intersection, this will be on the entities that decided to remove the stop lights.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Patric Cottrill
Oakes, ND resident

hello, no stoplight on Hwy 1 in Oakes and next to a school. Really? please vote to save our kids and community from this potential hazard. Truck traffic will have no deterrent to slow down. we voted you in, so now vote to help us.

thank you

Judy German

Hi - I am an employee of the Oakes Public School and also a parent. The stoplight is there to help control the flow of traffic through a busy intersection not just during school hours but year round. We have many kids that cross the busy road to go to the Tornado Stop or other businesses, as our Main Street is on the opposite side of the highway. I have always been concerned about the trucks that don't use the truck route and come through town much too quickly. If they take our stoplight away, I am even more concerned that a child could be harmed.

I am so surprised if this is an issue that we have to fight for. I know all of the students, and one loss would be one too many. To the people that are considering this, think about if this was your child or grandchild that had a school next to the road and had to cross the highway frequently. Wouldn't you want a stoplight to regulate the traffic to keep them safe all year round?

Praying you make the right decision, which is to install a new light in our town of Oakes. Denise Awender

Please help keep the stoplight in Oakes. This light enables our children to cross Hwy 1 by the school safely. Oakes has two major grain elevators and during harvest we have heavy semi traffic through Oakes. This light causes trucks to slow down and stop, whereas if the light was not there truck would push through town at above posted speed limit. If this light saves even one child or for that matter an adult from serious injury or death it is worth keeping.

If the light is removed, then we will need this area to be patrol at the beginning and ending of school each day.

Without the light, then the very least would be a four way all stop intersection. This is for the safety of the people in our town.

Sincerely,
Lavonne Ptacek

I am writing to you as a concerned parent, citizen & school board member of the Oakes district. I know that Oakes is slated to lose its traffic light on Highway 1.

This is of great concern to me. I have witnessed many semi trucks as well as automobiles going through town at an excessive rate of speed. Yes, I realize it is our city police's responsibility to try to stop that from happening but unfortunately they cannot just patrol the highway. With the traffic light, traffic traveling along Hwy 1 can see that from quite a distance and will begin slowing down. The traffic light can help slow some of the traffic down.

The traffic light crossing is the safest crossing for everyone in Oakes but especially our children. The traffic light is at the corner of our school & downtown. We have two daycare centers on main also. Many parents work in downtown Oakes and have their children walk to their place if work after school. With the crosswalk at the traffic light they are able to do this safely. I have witnessed many kids walking to school in the mornings and trying to cross the highway a block south of the traffic light. Traffic does not stop for them. After school we have a crossing guard but not in the mornings. I am amazed there has not been an accident involving a child. I am afraid that if the traffic light is removed and traffic is not forced to slow down, we will have one.

I don't believe any of us want a fatality of a child or anyone for that matter because the state decided to remove a traffic light right by a school instead of spending money to maintain it.

Thank you for your time and I trust that you will do what is best for Oakes.

Sheila Nagel

Dear North Dakota Legislators,

I am writing to give personal testimony as to why I am in favor of HB1246.

Each day, the crosswalk on Main Avenue and Highway 1 is used by a wide variety of members of our community. The busiest times are, of course, the times that students are coming to and from school. There are several daycares within one block of the school that utilize the crosswalks as well. Unfortunately, most vehicles do not stop at crosswalks to give pedestrians the right of way to safely cross. Many vehicles fail to obey the posted school speed limit as well. The one measure that ensures traffic will stop and allow pedestrians to safely cross is our stop light.

While I understand that the money spent on this light isnt feasible to some, each and every member of our community is invaluable. The safety of our citizens, young and old, will be put at risk every day if the stop light is removed.

As a school board member, parent, and citizen of Oakes, I strongly encourage passing HB1246.

Thank you,

Monica Heimbuch

I have lived most of my life in Oakes, and graduated from that school. That stoplight has always been there. I felt like having that stoplight was put there for the safety of the children being there is a busy highway that goes by that school. I'm afraid taking it away would not be safe for our school children!

Good afternoon,

As a resident of Oakes ND I believe that keeping the stop light on Highway One is vital for the safety of our community. With the schools location right on the highway, the safety of those children crossing the road is paramount. Being a rural community that road has heavy industrial and agricultural traffic. There are semis on that road literally year around. From farmers delivering their crops to the elevators in February to planting time, harvest and the custom combing crews coming through town. Not to mention the traffic due to steel work and other industrial traffic.

During the summer, there are children using that stop light for safe crossing of the highway to get to the pool, the baseball and softball diamonds and to the restaurants downtown.

Thank you for your support on keeping our community safe.

Shannon Jepson

Good Afternoon,

I am sending this email in regards to the stoplight in Oakes, ND. There are plans to remove this stoplight and I am concerned with that plan. Our stoplight is right next to our public school. If the stop light were to be removed, students lives would be put at risk. Please take into consideration the location of the stoplight and the safety that it provides the students at Oakes Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Kalyn Haafke

I am writing in response to an "in favor" of keeping the stop light on Highway 1 going through the center of Oakes, ND. I am currently an elementary teacher at the Oakes Public School and my room faces this highway. During numerous times of the day, the traffic is very heavy with trucks, buses and other traffic. The stop light slows down the traffic especially during the times of school starting and ending each day when the crossing is heavy with children coming and going to school. Please reconsider taking this stop light out and putting a stop sign back. We are very concerned for the safety of our children and other community members who use that crossing multiple times during the day.

Vickie Kelly

I am the Elementary Principal in Oakes, ND. I am writing to voice my support of keeping the stoplight on the corner of ND HWY 1 and Main Ave. in Oakes, ND. I am responsible for the education, health and well-being of 247 learners in my K-6 elementary school. Every day I make decisions about the education, health and well-being of those learners, each and every time I make a decision, I always ask myself, is this what is best for the learner and their family. If I am able to say yes to that question, I am able to easily sleep every night knowing I am doing the best I absolutely can for my learners. When it comes to the decision to possibly remove the stop light on the corner of our school, I am not able to say that this decision is best for our learners. Keeping our learners and their families safe arriving and leaving our campus has to be the 1st priority for us! I ask you to please fight for keeping our learner and their families safe by ensuring the stop light stays in place!

Thank you for your time. If you have questions, or would like me to voice my concerns to anyone else. Please feel free to reach out by replying to this email.

Greg Dobitz

Good Evening,

I am writing you in regards to the traffic light in Oakes. As a mother to two young children this traffic light gives me piece of mind. We do not live far from the school and walk there often to go to the library or the playground. As many other families in the community of Oakes do.

The stop light needs to stay. For my family it is for reasons of safety and memories. I am not born and raised from Oakes. Anyone I met before moving to Oakes described it as the town with the one traffic light. When one gives directions its look for the one stop light. When my parents come on the county road they call us when they can see the light from our one traffic light.

Yes it is 100% about safety but one can not also take away the memories that this one traffic light brings to life for our small North Dakota town.

I also am a kindergarten teacher at the school located right beside the traffic light. Our students walk to school with the safety of that traffic light in mind. Many travel from the school to Tornado stop and our other small town businesses.

Morning drop off and end of day dismissal are two definite times that there is an increase in traffic. Our childrens safety needs to be at the for front. They are the future of this small town. We have crossing guards that are there yo provide student safety at dismissal. What about for those students walking to school, supporting small town businesses on off hour or walking home with siblings at the end of the day?

Oakes,ND brings in all kinds of different people through out the year. People not familiar with our small town. That light is a big reminder to help people they need to SLOW down for the safety of everyone in our community.

Please KEEP the stop light in Oakes. For the safety of our future leaders.

Sincerely,

Kylie Weber

I would like to address my concerns at removing the stoplight in Oakes. My place of work is located on highway one and I regularly drive through the stoplight. There is a marked crosswalk on the corner of my office, traffic rarely stops for individuals waiting in the crosswalk. The light is the only place pedestrians are guaranteed to safely cross the highway. Even if the button is not being pushed, kids and adults alike cross there frequently all year long. It is the best route for pedestrians to get to our Main Street businesses and for kids heading to the softball park in the summer. I tell my kids to only cross there for safety reasons. There are many distracted drivers and people that drive faster than they should. Our police department is diligent during school hours but they cant be expected to watch the pedestrian crosswalks constantly. The sad reality is that drivers rarely stop for pedestrian crosswalks. Please keep our town and its residents safe.

Thank you for reading,
Sara Iverson

To whom it may concern,

Please consider leaving the stoplight operational in Oakes, ND. Just last week, I was running errands mid-evening. While I was waiting at the light, a young gentleman was crossing two intersections at the light, one of which he slipped and fell trying to cross. This split second was enough to make my heart sink. The amount of foot traffic crossing at the light is insurmountable to the tragedy it would be if we lost someone.

Daily, there are so many community members, both young and old, crossing these intersections at the stoplight. Highway 1 is a main route for numerous people both in our community and those passing through. The stoplight is one thing that helps control the speed throughout the town. I wish we could clearly convey how many kids and other community members are continuously crossing at the light. The location of the stoplight, businesses, and our school is unique to Oakes. It truly is a main safety piece to our community. Please vote to leave something that offers more safety to our community.

Sincerely,
Dani Roney

I am writing concerning the possibility of the stoplight on Highway 1 and Main Street being removed in Oakes. Please fight to keep this operating in our town. Its a busy intersection and RIGHT at the corner of the school. Sometimes that corner is scary enough with all the kids constantly there during the day. I cant imagine what it would be like without a stoplight. The safety of our kids is more important that any argument someone may bring up. Thanks so much for your consideration Jim!

Phil and Heather Roney



**City of Oakes
Police Department**

124 S 5th St
Oakes, ND 58474

Tel 701-742-2172

Fax 701-742-9336



January 17th, 2023

Dear Committee members,

The state has a program called Vision Zero which our school recently partnered with. This partnership was started because our students are making a commitment to keep our community safe. It is obvious from the submitted testimony in support of HB1246 that our community as a whole is committed to this goal. The one thing this process has done has brought our community together to show unity on an issue. We all agree on the safety for our kids.

I strongly oppose removing the traffic light on Main Ave and Highway 1. Parents tell their children to use that intersection because it informs them when to cross and not cross. We see time and time again when kids are standing at a school or pedestrian crossing, and traffic stops for them, they are still hesitant to cross. We don't see this issue at our traffic light.

Not every small community has a major highway that goes directly by a school. We must do everything we can to slow traffic in that area and help our children feel safe when they cross that busy intersection. It can already be scary experience for younger children to cross a road. We need to continue to find ways to make them feel safe, not take them away. I know as a parent that it gives me a sense of security when my child is crossing that intersection.

I am not just asking you as the Chief of Police of this department, but I am asking you as a father to hear our concerns and stand with us on this issue. As leaders we need to listen to the people that we serve and that's why I am asking you to support HB1246.

Respectfully,

Chief Matthew O'Brien

I am writing to ask for your support on HB 1246, regarding the traffic light in Oakes.

As a citizen of Oakes, parent of an elementary student, school board member and owner of property along Highway 1 in Oakes, I am very familiar with the traffic on Highway 1, specifically at the intersection where the traffic signal is located. Like many, I drive through this intersection on a daily basis, and see firsthand the amount of traffic and pedestrians all trying cross safely at the light. Children are seen mornings and afternoon crossing, some even during lunch hour or traveling mid-day to the vocational center for class. The light is at the corner of a busy convenience store, and a block away from two day care facilities. People use the traffic light throughout the year - kids coming and going to the pool, parks, waking dogs, riding bikes, etc. Elevator traffic and the return of Bobcat employees all contribute to additional traffic at the traffic signal on any given day.

Living south of the light, it is scary to see how fast the traffic enters Oakes from the south. The traffic signal is a great reminder of the need to slow down - it can easily be seen from some distance, reminding trucks and anyone driving to slow down upon approaching the center of town.

Please vote in support of keeping our traffic signal - in doing so, you will also be voting to keep our children and citizens safe. Thank you.

Rhonda Day

As a city councilman of the city of Oakes and the parent of an 11 year old student at Oakes Public School, I am deeply concerned with the planned removal of the traffic signal at Main Avenue and 7th Street/Highway 1 intersection.

We as a community contacted our local legislators to help us retain this traffic signal. Senator Erbele, Representative Grueneich and Representative Brandenburg heard our concerns and offered their help.

While I firmly believe our D.O.T. engineers are highly qualified and do a great job, I also believe that other important variables need to be considered before the removal of this traffic signal. I understand traffic volume, but there is more to consider.

As you know, we live in the age of distracted drivers. Music, pets, other occupants in vehicles, eating/drinking, reading, navigation systems - all of these contribute to distracted driving. Of course, the largest concern when it comes to distracted driving is the use of mobile devices. Mobile devices provide music/navigation, texting, social media - they constantly distract us throughout our day, and frequently when driving. When approaching a traffic control device, the average individual turns his or her focus to the light. Without the traffic control device, people have nothing to catch their attention and make them aware of their surroundings.

With the proximity of Highway 1 being on the east side of Oakes Public School, it creates a substantial risk for pedestrians walking. The hours of 8am-8:30am, and again from 3:00pm-3:45pm are prime times for both pedestrian and vehicle traffic at the location of the traffic control signal. Students are walking to and from school, parents are seen circling the school in search of that perfect location to pick up their children, and older students are rushing to leave school to get to jobs, home or other activities. These all also coincide with the afternoon traffic from local residents returning from their employment at Bobcat in Gwinner. With the shift change at 3pm, most Bobcat employees arrive back in Oakes between 3:30 and 3:45pm, compounding the amount of traffic and congestion at the location of the traffic signal.

One block east of Highway 1 are two daycare facilities. Every school day, children are seen crossing Highway 1, traveling to these daycares for after-school programs. In the warmer months, children and daycare staff are seen on walks along the highway, and utilize the traffic control device as a safe zone to cross on a walk or to the swimming pool or parks.

Also at the same intersection of Highway 1 and Main Avenue is the location of a busy convenience store. Young and old students, teachers, and many in the general public frequent this convenience store for food, and gas throughout the day.

Oakes is home to 3 elevators and a fertilizer plant. Fifteen miles north of Oakes is the location of another large elevator. Trucks are constantly seen traveling on Highway 1 through Oakes, at all hours of the day. There are also many large farming operations in the greater Oakes area, so on any given day, you can see a wide range of farming equipment utilizing the Highway through town. The trucks and equipment require longer stopping distances, and without the traffic control device, these large vehicles would have difficulty stopping for pedestrians and bike traffic, thus creating a hazard.

The overwhelming opinion in our community is that we want to keep this traffic signal in place, due to the extremely close proximity to our school. I believe the safety of our students is paramount.

Thank you for your time and commitment to the safety and well being of the citizens of North Dakota!

Respectfully,
Mr.Shannon Day

Dear North Dakota State Legislature,

I am writing to request your consideration for the maintenance and repair of the existing stop light at the intersection of Highway 1 and Main Street in Oakes, North Dakota. This intersection is located near the Oakes Public School, which is attended by many children and young people.

As the population and traffic in Oakes continues to grow, this intersection has become increasingly busy, making it a crucial point for the safety of both drivers and pedestrians, especially for children and young people who walk or bike to school. Cars and trucks traveling on Highway 1 often exceed posted speed limits, making it difficult for drivers on Main Street to safely cross or turn onto the highway. Additionally, emergency vehicles need to navigate this intersection safely.

I urge you to consider the safety of the residents and visitors of Oakes and the surrounding areas, especially school children, by maintaining and repairing the existing stop light at this intersection. This simple measure will greatly improve the safety and accessibility of this area for everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Former School Board member, and current city council member

John Bakke

January 16, 2023

TO: Representative Jim Grueneich

FROM: Nicole German
10140 89th St SE
Oakes, ND 58474

RE: **HB 1246** (Stoplight removal in Oakes, ND)

Dear Representative Grueneich,

Please accept this letter of support for HB 1246 and my concern regarding the proposed removal of the stoplight at the intersection of ND Highway 1 and Main Avenue in Oakes, ND. My concerns are based on the following observations and experience.

1. I work as a paraeducator at Oakes Public School which is located at the corner of the aforementioned intersection. During recess duty, I directly witness *daily* the frequency and speed of vehicles passing by the playground and school area. The speed of vehicles through this area is atrocious. And this is with a stoplight, I can't fathom what it will look like without the stoplight as a safety measure. This is significant safety concern for students not only for arriving and leaving school but also during the lunch timeframe. The "Tornado Stop" convenience store is on the same intersection, across the street from the school. This a popular eating place for students during lunch and before/after school. During these times, there is a *significant* increase in pedestrian traffic crossing ND Highway 1 (despite what the light "data" may show). Without the stoplight, students (including my own), will lose the safety and protection of a crosswalk. A student fatality would be tragic; and even more horrific if it resulted from a decision based on inaccurate data and cost-analysis.
2. Oakes is a thriving agricultural community. During spring planting and fall harvest especially, there is an increase in large machinery and semi-truck traffic through town, specifically along ND Highway 1. Again, I have witnessed first-hand the speed of which these vehicles pass by the school. Drivers that are unfamiliar with the community, may be unaware they will passing directly through a school zone. The stoplight provides at least some measure of speed control. Without the stoplight I have no doubt trucks would pass through town at speeds upward to 40-50mph. This is not only dangerous for students, but anyone trying to cross any intersection within city limits along ND Highway 1.
3. On a personal level, I am the parent of a 12-year son who happens to have Down syndrome. We recently moved back to Oakes (my hometown) from Fargo for multiple reasons. One of those reasons being the safety and community security of a small town. Everyday we are working to help my son (and 8-year old daughter) navigate independently within our community. This includes being able to walk to and from school to businesses, and to friends' homes. The stoplight is the very thing that will allow them to do that. they can safely navigate across ND Highway 1 using the Main Avenue stoplight. Granted, this means having to walk a few extra blocks, but the additional safety that this stoplight and crosswalk provide is invaluable. This stoplight is a vital safety piece for our children to safely navigate within the community. Many parents and community members share my grave concern regarding the impact removing the stoplight will have on the safety of *all children* in our community.

Representative Grueneich, I respectfully petition for you and your constituents to exercise due diligence in determining the status of the stoplight at the intersection of ND Highway 1 and Main Avenue in Oakes, ND. The safety of a thriving small-town community is in your hands.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole Knodel
Concerned Oakes community parent

I am a family nurse practitioner in Oakes, ND and a mother of 3. The thought of the stoplight being removed from our town is disheartening. The safety of our students and community members is of the utmost importance and the stoplight will help assist with this. I have witnessed several accounts over the past 12 years of living here where there are near misses at this location. These near misses may end up being true accidents and detrimental events if the stoplight is removed. This is a busy highway especially with semi-trucks, delivery trucks, etc. Please help us keep our stoplight to ensure our current and future community members stay safe.

Sincerely,
Denise Erlandson

I am writing you this letter on behalf of our Oakes Public Schools student body, as I am the student body president, I feel it is my duty to look out for current and future students. While you were campaigning, I had the pleasure of meeting you at the Southeast Career and Tech Center, which my fellow students and I drive to every day. While talking to you, I felt you had a great outlook on students and the great future of North Dakota. At our school we just became a Vision Zero School, to protect my peers, however you also have the ability to protect our students. As a student, I can admit to not being focused on driving all the time and I know the same goes for my peers, with that I am thankful we have our stoplight to help with this issue. I ask you to protect all my peers by voting to keep the stoplight outside our school with house bill 1246. I have been the student running across the street without looking, and the stoplight has kept us safe by slowing and stopping traffic. The traffic around the school is not just before and after school, but during the day as students are driving to our Career and Tech Center, where I met you. During peak harvest time this becomes dangerous with the removal of the light with semis hauling grain speeding through town, to get as much done as possible. I don't want any of my peer's life to be taken over any amount of money for the stoplight, money cannot be more important than a classmate or underclassman's life. I am glad you are the one voting on this issue, as our talk before made me feel you have mine and my peer's interest in favor. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter, I hope it compels you to protect me and my peers with this bill.

Jaci Praska



City of Oakes North Dakota

City Hall, 124 South 5th Street, Oakes ND 58474
Phone: 701-742-2137 Fax: 701-742-9336 Email: auditor@oakesnd.com



January 17, 2023

Representative Grueneich
P.O. Box 84
Ellendale, ND 58436-0084

Re: House Bill No. 1246

The City of Oakes wishes to voice our ardent support for House Bill No. 1246; specifically the amendment regarding traffic control devices. We have a stop light on Highway 1 at the intersection where our school is located and recently a traffic study determined we do not meet the requirements to keep this device. This determination was met with strong concern from the school and community as it is the main pedestrian crossing for our K-12 students. Highway 1 intersects with Main Avenue which is our central business corridor in Oakes and many students walk there to eat lunch and run other errands daily.

Oakes and the surrounding area's primary business is farming. We have two large elevators and receive a high volume of semi-truck traffic particularly during spring planting and fall harvesting. We believe that removing the device would be dangerous for all pedestrians as semi-trucks especially cannot stop quickly to avoid accidents.

The fears and concerns of what could happen if this stop light is removed are significant. The City of Oakes respectfully submits this letter of support and asks that you pass House Bill No. 1246 and help us keep our community safe.

Sincerely,

Nathan O'Brien
Mayor

I am writing to explain the importance of Oakes keeping the stoplight on Hwy 1. This stoplight is right next to an elementary school and is located at a very busy intersection of town. There are many kids who cross the highway during several different times of the day. Lots of kids cross the highway to go to Tornado Stop, Sweets & Stories and the cafe for lunch. Also, many kids from the daycare and preschool cross the highway on a daily basis. Even with the stoplight in place, we still have lots of truck traffic, as well as regular traffic, who fail to slow down through this area. If we remove the one thing that is stopping them or at least slowing them down, I fear someone will end up getting injured or killed. We have a crosswalk located 1 block south of this stoplight and on multiple occasions I have seen near-miss accidents. I have stopped to let someone walk across on the crosswalk, but traffic from the other direction doesn't stop. It's a scary situation and I don't think it will be safe to just have cross walks in the location where the stoplight is located now.

I can't imagine the expense of keeping this light is so great that it is worth risking the life of a child. We ask that you allow this stoplight to remain intact.

Sincerely,
Janell Mayer
City Council Member
Hospital Foundation Board Member
Mom
Teacher
And long-time member of the Oakes Community

Dear Legislators,

As a member of Dickey County and a community member of Oakes, ND, I am writing this email in regards to the stoplight being taken out/down in our town. While I understand that you have put a lot of time and effort into this decision, I would like to bring up a few points regarding the safest option for our community.

There is a lot of hustle and bustle in our little town. Whether its kids coming and going from school or community members out and about, there's always someone walking along. I am concerned mostly for the kids in our school district and children attending the local daycares. Students are walking every day to and from the school, where the stoplight is conveniently located. The stoplight creates an easy and smooth traffic flow so students can successfully walk across. During the summer months, while school is not in session, daycares are crossing that main part of town because it is the safest option with the stoplight stopping cars from coming through. My main concern is something happening to one of these children/adults in the process of attempting to cross the street without a stoplight. Also, during the warmer months, we have people of all ages going for walks, riding bikes, and even roller blading. I can't imagine how chaotic of a scene could transpire with our active community members mixed in with cars trying to get through.

I ask that you please reconsider your decision before someone from our thriving and active small town gets hurt.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Makenzie Wertz

dDear Legislators,

I am writing to you in regards to the removal of the stoplight in the city of Oakes. I am a parent of a young visually impaired child. My daughter has a genetic condition that caused her to permanently lose some of her vision. We know that she has lost some of her peripheral vision. Because of this walking without tripping over objects and noticing objects on either side of her has been challenging. She will more than likely continue to lose more vision which may or may not end in total blindness. I am telling you this because my family has come to rely on this stoplight for several reasons.

Four days a week I walk my daughter from her daycare on Main Street to Oakes Public School to attend Special Education Preschool. We cross the intersection that the stoplight is on during the noon hour, during one of the busiest times at that intersection. Have you ever had to cross a busy intersection, with no stoplight, with a young child(ren) in tow? I have. As a parent not only are you constantly watching the cars in both lanes to ensure the driver has seen you and is stopping, but you are also trying to get the child (ren) across the street safely. This stoplight has ensured that my daughter and I have a safe place to cross, two times a day, four days a week. Without this stop light I feel we would be safer to drive the three blocks to school. As I stated earlier, my daughter has difficulty walking safely due to her vision loss. She walks with a white cane and still requires assistance from an adult to remind her to use her cane correctly and watch out for things in the crossing that she could potentially trip over. This has made us slower in crossing the street than a similar aged peer with no vision loss. After we hit that crossing button and wait for the lights to change, I know that the traffic has stopped and I can focus more on the safety of my child. Without this stoplight I would fear for the safety of my child if she had to cross that intersection at any age. She deserves to feel safe in her own community.

I want you to think about when you cross the street. How do you know that it is safe to cross? Do you look both ways and see that there are no approaching vehicles or that the vehicles have come to a complete stop? I know I do. I also know that my daughter can't fully rely on her vision to safely cross at an intersection, she has to use other senses. As she gets older, she will be trained on how to use her hearing to help her cross the street. Listening to the way cars sound when they slow down or speed up. The only spot in our town where we are guaranteed that traffic will stop is at the stoplight. This is the best spot for her to stand by the intersection and listen to the traffic. If the stop light is removed, I am not sure how effectively we can teach her to cross an intersection.

In closing, I want you to try to envision what it must be like to be visually impaired living in a fully sighted world. Everything is harder. Everything you encounter in life needs some kind of adaptation. Please don't make it even harder for her to cross the street.

Thank you for your consideration in the matter.

Sincerely,

Amanda Geffre

Oakes Student Body House Bill 1246

Name/ Address

Andrea Cabeza Dr. Burlwood 901

Bri Schmitz 822 Chestnut Ln

Oakes Student Body House Bill 1246	
Name/ Address	
EADIE STAPLES	315 South 8th Street 58474
Kyle Farley	209 N 5th St
Grant Wagner	10085 88th St Se
Marden Malmberg	404 S 5th St
Dylan Rodine	8737 11th Ave SE
Xavier Vosster	622 Hickory Ave apt C
Lauren Allston	8918 Hwy 1
Ashton Hollingsworth	208 Lola Ave, Oakes, ND 58474
Jocelyn Quandt	505 main Ave Oakes 58474
Bethany Harris	818 Chestnut Lane 58474
Avery Kapfer	714 Elm Ave. 58474
Noah Wood	120 N 9th Street
Roddele Schmit	801 N 7th St
Eve Wolff	426 10th St N
Mallory Harris	818 Chestnut Lane
Sarah Schmitz	202 nectarine Ave
Savannah Sundby	1503 Hickory Ave
Addisyn Visto	1130 8th Street S
Aaliyah Aberle	212
Lexi Harris	8760 112 Ave SE
BEN WAGNER	10085 88th ST SE

Oakes Student Body House Bill 1246	
Name/ Address	
Khadence Wiedmeier	314 S 6th St Oakes ND 58474
Mita Albro	905 Glenwood dr oakes nd 58474
Kate Harris	818 Chestnut lane Oakes ND 58474
Andrew Wolff	426 N 10 th St. Oakes ND 58474
Mason German	119 N 12 th st Oakes ND 58474
Alayna Sundby	1503 Hickory Ave Oakes ND 58474
Molly Sitzler	324 11 th St S Oakes ND 58474
Aliyah Greenland	414 6 th St S Oakes ND 58474
Cody Mayer	901 Dogwood ave Oakes ND 58474
Brooklyn Witkowski	16 N 12 th Street oakes ND 58474
Staten Stearns	109 2b 9bst SE Oakes ND
Zane Avender	8424 111 th ave SE Oakes ND
Natalie Thompson	9027 Hwy 1 Oakes ND 58474
Ava Thompson	9027 Hwy 1 Oakes ND 58474
Max Cline	8451 Hwy 1 Oakes ND 58474
Jarett Gebhardt	10891 88 th st SE Oakes ND 58474
Jaci Praska	324 S 12 th St Oakes ND 58474
Jwrek	215 N 5 th St Oakes ND 58474
David Bakke	901 bur/wood Dr Oakes ND 58474
Paige Bakke	901 Burlwood Dr Oakes ND 58474
Isabelle Friedt	406 South 12 th Street

Oakes Student Body House Bill 1246

Name/ Address

Lailyn Roney 1104 88st SE Oakes ND 58474

Jaydon Hankel 10288 94th St SE ND 58474

Jake Kaebun 10774 81st SE Oake ND 58474

London Ptrebet 318 N 13th St Oakes, ND 58474

Noah Sundby 1503 Hickory Ave Oakes ND, 58474

Joseph T. Schaefer 812 Lilac Ave Oakes ND, 58474

Gabby Breker 306 N 14th

Hallie Warrel 222 South 7th St Oakes ND, 58474

Samantha Meehl 10007 101 St SE Oakes, ND 58474

Trey Miles 209 North 10th Street 58474

Lynic Nelson 1454 Ivy Ave 58474

Emily Rosendahl Evergreen Ave 1274

Jack Thorpe 10603 96 St SE

Isaac Paradis 305 South 9th Street

Elle Cline 8951 Hwy 1 Oakes ND 58474

Lily Thorpe 10672 Hwy 11

Aspen Hill 11071 82nd St SE 58474 Oakes, ND

Nora Bergerson 14 S 15th St.

[Handwritten signature] Andrew Unken

[Handwritten signature]

**House Bill No. 1246****House Transportation Committee**

Room 327E | January 19, 2023, 2:50 p.m.

Matt Linneman, Deputy Director for Engineering

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I'm Matt Linneman, Deputy Director for Engineering of the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT). I'm here to provide opposition to House Bill 1246.

House Bill 1246 would require the department to obtain consent of the political subdivision to remove or deactivate a traffic control device placed within 1,000 feet of a school or licensed daycare. We have reviewed the existing state and federal laws the department must adhere to relating to traffic control devices and have concluded what the impacts to the department and the state of North Dakota would be.

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is the law governing all traffic control devices. As part of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) federal aid program, all states shall adopt the National MUTCD or have a State MUTCD/supplement that is in substantial conformance with the national manual.

Century Code 39-13-06 and 39-13-07 states the director shall adopt the MUTCD and that no traffic-control devices, including markings, signs, and signals, may be used on any street or highway that do not conform to the standards of design and location as prescribed in the manual and specifications for a uniform system of traffic-control devices. The MUTCD defines traffic control devices as all signs, signals, markings, and other devices used to regulate, warn, or guide traffic.

The Century Code defines political subdivision as all counties, townships, park districts, school districts, cities, public nonprofit corporations, administrative or legal entities responsible for administration of joint powers agreements, and any other units of local government which are created either by statute or by the Constitution of North Dakota for local government or other public purposes.

House Bill 1246 would substantially impact the efficient operations of the department and the ability of the department to adhere to sound engineering principals and existing laws. According to FHWA key messages about the MUTCD, non-compliance with the MUTCD ultimately can result in the loss of federal-aid funds as well as a significant increase in tort liability. The department opposes the passage of House Bill 1246.

This concludes my testimony. Thank You.

January 16, 2023

TO: Representative Jim Grueneich

FROM: Nicole German
10140 89th St SE
Oakes, ND 58474

RE: **HB 1246** (Stoplight removal in Oakes, ND)

Dear Representative Grueneich,

Please accept this letter of support for HB 1246 and my concern regarding the proposed removal of the stoplight at the intersection of ND Highway 1 and Main Avenue in Oakes, ND. My concerns are based on the following observations and experience.

1. I work as a paraeducator at Oakes Public School which is located at the corner of the aforementioned intersection. During recess duty, I directly witness *daily* the frequency and speed of vehicles passing by the playground and school area. The speed of vehicles through this area is atrocious. And this is with a stoplight, I can't fathom what it will look like without the stoplight as a safety measure. This is significant safety concern for students not only for arriving and leaving school but also during the lunch timeframe. The "Tornado Stop" convenience store is on the same intersection, across the street from the school. This a popular eating place for students during lunch and before/after school. During these times, there is a *significant* increase in pedestrian traffic crossing ND Highway 1 (despite what the light "data" may show). Without the stoplight, students (including my own), will lose the safety and protection of a crosswalk. A student fatality would be tragic; and even more horrific if it resulted from a decision based on inaccurate data and cost-analysis.
2. Oakes is a thriving agricultural community. During spring planting and fall harvest especially, there is an increase in large machinery and semi-truck traffic through town, specifically along ND Highway 1. Again, I have witnessed first-hand the speed of which these vehicles pass by the school. Drivers that are unfamiliar with the community, may be unaware they will passing directly through a school zone. The stoplight provides at least some measure of speed control. Without the stoplight I have no doubt trucks would pass through town at speeds upward to 40-50mph. This is not only dangerous for students, but anyone trying to cross any intersection within city limits along ND Highway 1.
3. On a personal level, I am the parent of a 12-year son who happens to have Down syndrome. We recently moved back to Oakes (my hometown) from Fargo for multiple reasons. One of those reasons being the safety and community security of a small town. Everyday we are working to help my son (and 8-year old daughter) navigate independently within our community. This includes being able to walk to and from school to businesses, and to friends' homes. The stoplight is the very thing that will allow them to do that. they can safely navigate across ND Highway 1 using the Main Avenue stoplight. Granted, this means having to walk a few extra blocks, but the additional safety that this stoplight and crosswalk provide is invaluable. This stoplight is a vital safety piece for our children to safely navigate within the community. Many parents and community members share my grave concern regarding the impact removing the stoplight will have on the safety of *all children* in our community.

Representative Grueneich, I respectfully petition for you and your constituents to exercise due diligence in determining the status of the stoplight at the intersection of ND Highway 1 and Main Avenue in Oakes, ND. The safety of a thriving small-town community is in your hands.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole Knodel
Concerned Oakes community parent

Dear Legislators,

My name is Robert Hernandez, and as a long time member of this community I would like to address my concern on the matter of the street light in Oakes, ND. I understand there are rules and regulations to follow from the state as this light is on the highway, but I feel we fall into a special situation as our school sits right beside it at a busy intersection. I live just a few blocks down on the highway itself and unfortunately many trucks and semi trailers do travel well above the speed limit. I feel the only thing that even starts them slowing down is the possibility of that light changing. If that intersection were to change to just a two way stop, there would be no reason for trucks to slow. And the last thing any parent or member of this community would want to see is a child get hit crossing the street to the busy gas station were many children frequent throughout different times of the day. So please, let's do the safe thing and let the traffic light stay for the safety of our ND residents! Thank You for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,
Robert Hernandez-Waite

207 7th St N, Oakes, ND 58474
HERNANDEZWAITE@GMAIL.COM

23.0676.02001

Sixty-eighth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

HOUSE BILL NO. 1246

Introduced by

Representatives Grueneich, Brandenburg, Ostlie, Satrom, Vigesaa
Senator Erbele

1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 39-10-04 of the North Dakota Century Code,
2 relating to required traffic-control devices; and to declare an emergency.

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

4 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 39-10-04 of the North Dakota Century Code is
5 amended and reenacted as follows:

6 **39-10-04. Obedience to and required traffic-control devices.**

- 7 1. The driver of ~~anya~~ vehicle shall obey the instructions of any official traffic-control
8 device applicable thereto placed in accordance with the provisions of this chapter,
9 unless otherwise directed by a traffic or police officer, subject to the exceptions
10 granted the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle in this chapter.
- 11 2. ~~No~~A provision of this chapter for which traffic-control devices are required may not be
12 enforced against an alleged violator if at the time and place of the alleged violation an
13 official device is not in proper position and sufficiently legible to be seen by an
14 ordinarily observant person. Whenever a state statute does not state that devices are
15 required, ~~such~~the statute is effective even though no devices are erected or in place.
- 16 3. Whenever an official traffic-control ~~devices are~~device is placed in ~~positions~~a position
17 approximately conforming to the requirements of this title, ~~such device~~the device
18 must be presumed to have been so placed by the official act or direction of lawful
19 authority, unless the contrary is established by competent evidence.
- 20 4. Any official traffic-control device placed pursuant to the provisions of this title and
21 purporting to conform to the lawful requirements pertaining to ~~such device~~the device
22 must be presumed to comply with the requirements of this title, unless the contrary is
23 established by competent evidence.

- 1 5. The department may not remove or inactivate a traffic-control ~~device~~signal placed
2 within ~~the corporate limits of a city and within~~ one thousand feet [304.8 meters] of a
3 ~~public or nonpublic elementary, middle, or high~~ school ~~or licensed day care~~ without the
4 consent of the ~~political subdivision~~city having jurisdiction of the location where the
5 traffic-control ~~device~~signal is placed, except for repair or routine maintenance.

6 **SECTION 2. EMERGENCY.** This Act is declared to be an emergency measure.

**House Bill No. 1246****Senate Transportation Committee**

Fort Totten Room | March 16, 2023, 9 am

Matt Linneman, Deputy Director for Engineering

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I'm Matt Linneman, Deputy Director for Engineering of the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT). I'm here to provide support for House Bill 1246.

House Bill 1246 would require the department to consult with a city when removing a traffic signal within 1000 ft of a school. This language is in line with the current procedures used by the NDDOT. The department is committed to engaging with our local public agency partners, the public, and other interested stakeholders. In the specific case of a traffic signal improvement, replacement, or removal, the NDDOT would always consult with the city on the specific needs of the community and take that into consideration during the project development and decision-making process.

This concludes my testimony. Thank You.