

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER, OCEANS, AND WILDLIFE
HYBRID LEGISLATIVE HEARING

May 12, 2022

2:00 p.m. ET

Legislative Hearing on H.R. 263, H.R. 3081, H.R. 5880, H.R. 6238, H.R. 6369, H.R. 7612, H.R. 7632,
and H.R. 7633

Question from Rep. Bentz for Carter Vander Wal (Irrigator, Board of Directors, North Dakota Irrigation Association and District 2 Representative, Board of Directors, KEM Electric Cooperative)

1. Please provide a list of those organizations supporting this bill. In addition, please detail why rural electric cooperatives are supporting this bill.

H.R. 3081 has broad-based support from agriculture groups, the water community, the State of North Dakota, and rural electric cooperatives. Those groups include: the North Dakota Department of Water Resources, the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, the North Dakota Water Users Association, the North Dakota Irrigation Association, the North Dakota Ethanol Producers Association, the North Dakota Corn Growers Association, the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association, Northern Plains Potato Growers Association, North Dakota Farmers Union, and the North Dakota Farm Bureau.

Rural electric cooperatives are supportive of this bill because they are committed to improving the quality of life in their local communities. For many, part of that commitment includes maximizing the value of the Missouri River by maintaining and increasing the viability of irrigation from the river. Access to project pumping power does just that. That's not just a hypothetical; cooperatives have seen the benefit in areas where irrigators have access to project pumping power. According to North Dakota State University, the value of one irrigated acre is about equivalent to four dryland acres; in drought years, that value increases to a one to six ratio. Increased irrigation increases the resiliency of agriculture, often the economic backbone of small communities. The increased value seen from agriculture commodities is injected into the local economies where these commodities are grown and processed. Strong vibrant communities are good for producers, good for small towns, good for businesses, and good for electric cooperatives.