



Letter of Support – H.F. 2224

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Co-Chair Franson, Co-Chair Lee, and Members of the House Capital Investment Committee,

My name is Cale Dunwoody, and I have the distinct pleasure of serving as the Vice President of Public Policy for the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce (FMWF Chamber). On behalf of our over 1,700 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of H.F. 2224.

At the FMWF Chamber, our mission is to protect and promote business, inspire individuals, cultivate communities, and influence action. Clay County is one of the fastest growing metros in the Midwest, and the fastest growing county outside of the metro region – offering vast opportunities to work, grow, and thrive in a developing community. The FM Diversion project is vital to providing the Moorhead-Fargo region with sustainable and permanent flood protection – protecting citizens, businesses and foundational community assets. The FMWF Chamber continues to be a steadfast champion and community convener for this project and once completed, this diversion project will provide significant economic and social benefits for our region – continuing our region’s growth and prosperity.

The FM Diversion project is a bi-state, public-private partnership project, that will provide critical flood protection for over 260,000 Minnesota and North Dakota residents and thousands of businesses. The project was developed in response to multiple major regional flood events, such as the flood of 1997, which devastated many communities along the Red River Valley. For example, Grand Forks, ND, and East Grand Forks, MN, incurred roughly \$6.4 billion (when adjusted for inflation) in damage during the flood of ‘97, more than the total cost to complete the FM Diversion project. This project is imperative to the safety, vibrancy and prosperity of our community.

With its regional impacts, the over 3-billion-dollar project has received significant funding from federal, state, and local entities to finance a majority of the components needed to complete the project. While there has been a substantial amount of work completed on the project, estimated at over 65-percent completed, there remains a lack of funding to complete many of the Minnesota components. These components are foundational to the project and are necessary to fulfill the [Settlement Agreement](#) and receive Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) certification. The FEMA certification is essential to reduce the 50 million dollars in flood insurance premiums paid annually by area residents and businesses. FM Diversion project will provide substantial cost savings for residents, businesses, and local governmental entities by removing costly insurance premiums and financial costs associated with detrimental flood damage and clean-up. In 2009 alone, the Fargo-Moorhead area spent \$8.2 million (\$12.1 million when adjusted for inflation) on fighting the flood.

The appropriation of the entire funding amount requested in this bill offers many direct benefits to the state and local community. Delays in additional funding for this project will result FEMA certification delays, inflationary cost increases, continued payment of flood insurance premiums, and potential economic and societal impacts from flooding. I respectfully urge the committee to support the funding request outlined in H.F. 2224 to finalize the FM Diversion project and provide the Moorhead-Fargo region with permanent and sustainable flood protection.

Sincerely,

Cale Dunwoody
Vice President of Public Policy
Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce