

NEWS RELEASE | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | April 14, 2023

## Northwest Area Water Supply Project Advisory Committee Elevated to Authority

BISMARCK – On April 12, North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum signed House Bill (HB) 1218 related to Northwest Area Water Supply (NAWS) project oversight. HB 1218 elevates the current NAWS Advisory Committee to an authority and puts it in line with other regional water systems across the state.

NAWS was developed to address longstanding water supply and poor water quality problems in northern North Dakota by delivering high-quality Missouri River water to the region. Construction of NAWS began in 2002, with a main line and associated features being built between the city of Minot and Lake Sakakawea. Later in 2002, lawsuits were initiated, delaying the project until 2019. Today, construction on the NAWS project is back underway, with interim water supplies provided by the city of Minot.

“Currently, with various projects under construction that will move water from Lake Sakakawea to Minot by fall of 2024, there is a need to update and modernize the project’s oversight,” said Department of Water Resources (DWR) director Andrea Travnicek. “As the NAWS project progresses, it’s important to have all user groups providing project direction. The new NAWS Authority will do just that.”

Currently, the NAWS Advisory Committee consists of one person representing each of the following: Minot, water resource districts, State Water Commission (SWC), Turtle Mountain, rural water, other municipal, Garrison Diversion Conservancy District and an at-large member.

Under the new authority, there will be four representatives from Minot and a representative from North Prairie Regional Water District, All Seasons Water Users District, Upper Souris Water District, cities other than the city of Minot with direct water service from NAWS and the State Water Commissioner representing the Souris River Basin. Nonvoting members will include representatives from the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District and the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians.

“Proper oversight of this project is vital to its long-term success,” said Jason Zimmerman, State Water Commissioner representing the Mouse (Souris) River Basin. “81,000 North Dakotans will

one day rely on this project to receive high-quality water, so it's exciting to see ongoing progress, and an honor to represent the Water Commission on the NAWS authority."

HB 1218 also defines the role of the SWC and directs the DWR to provide staffing and support.

For more information, please visit [www.dwr.nd.gov](http://www.dwr.nd.gov).

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**Doug Burgum, *Governor***

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