

I am Dan Keeley. I live and farm at 5975 Buyserie Rd. NE in the heart of French Prairie. We operate a 300 acre field and orchard crop operation.

I oppose this law on multiple grounds but as I am a civil engineer as well as a farmer I will restrict most of my comments to the engineering issues. You will (or have) heard from others regarding the social, economic, agricultural and planning problems and disadvantages so I won't repeat those except to say they are numerous, serious and should be sufficient to kill the bill all by themselves. But if you still aren't convinced here are some more technical reasons to drop this idea:

1. Anyone who has driven I-5 at rush hour lately understands it is already at capacity in several areas. Shifting Casino traffic from 99W to I-5 will relocate, not reduce, traffic congestion with serious impacts to freight mobility. As the Boone Bridge is the only freeway river crossing in the area there are no reasonable alternative routes for heavy freight traffic.

2. This bill is designed to short circuit the planning, checks and balances and a fair share of the public input built into the ODOT system for large complex projects. ODOT's traffic engineers have already analyzed the problems along 99W. The Newburg Dundee Bypass which is now under construction is designed to address them, and without tolls.

3. The design life of pavements on ODOT highway projects is generally specified as 20-30 years. The developers of this thing will be kindly donating it to the tax payers just in time for all of us to fund rebuilding it.

4. While the developers propose overpasses for many of the county roads they cannot maintain all access or mitigate all costs. There are many private access roads that will be cut by the freeway, increased costs that will be generated by cutting fields and farms in half and increased traffic and accidents generated by the need to go around the freeway, not to mention the traffic related problems on the freeway. As a long time volunteer fire fighter for St. Paul I don't need any more of any of that.

5. The bills current language will require the promoters to reimburse the taxpayers for only the "compensation paid to property owners" by ODOT during the condemnation proceedings. This is generally a small fraction of the cost of condemnations with most of the expense being legal fees, appraisals and other paper work. If the bill is passed as is, the taxpayers will fund a substantial portion of the project cost. Probably a much higher portion than on most other projects due to a much higher than average percentage of properties requiring condemnation. On large projects I have been involved in a 10% condemnation rate was considered high. I think this project would turn those numbers upside down.

6. And one final comment. This bill is not an emergency. The problem has taken 20 years to develop and the proposed project would take 5 – 10 years to fund, permit and construct. Bypassing standard protections built into the law for implementation is ridiculous under these circumstances.

Thanks for listening.