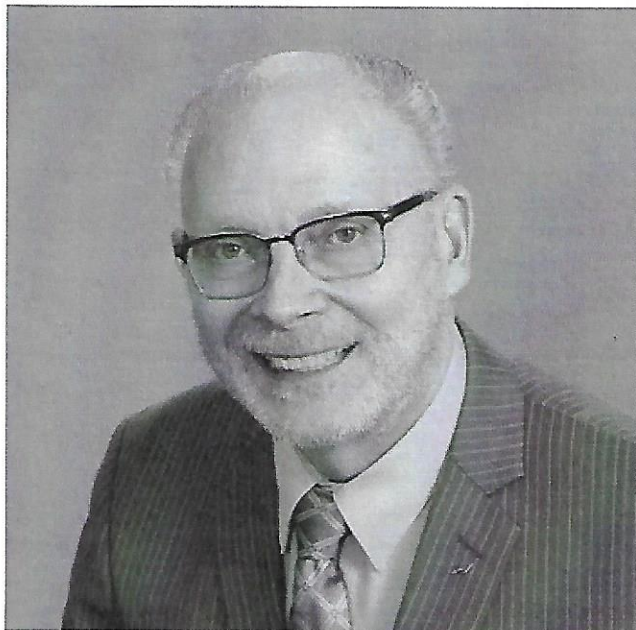


Letter From the Chair



ECHOES OF ELITISM: RESISTING POWER IN ND

In 1915, Arthur Townley, an organizer for North Dakota's Socialist Party, observed a state legislature session debate over a state-owned terminal elevator for farmers' wheat marketing. Treadwell Twichell, a Fargo State Representative, patronizingly told farmers to just "go home and slop the hogs." The elitist attitude shown in Twichell's missive aimed at farmers seems to be present again in North Dakota state government, and has made itself apparent in various recent instances:

- 1) January 2024: The Public Service Commission overrides county pipeline ordinances, ignoring legislative intent of a law that was not intended to allow the PSC to override local ordinances.
- 2) Winter 2024: Allocation of a \$300k grant for carbon capture as public reeducation amid widespread public concerns about a pipeline's safety concerns being voiced by local governments in the capital city and surrounding counties.
- 3) Fall 2023: Lack of public input in the Model Zoning Taskforce for Animal Agriculture, favoring industry voices. The Taskforce could end up stripping local control from counties relating to CAFOs.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

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(LETTER FROM THE CHAIR CONTINUED)

4) November 2023: Restrictions on public comments at Dakota Access Pipeline Army Corps hearings. People were asked to read their testimony in a booth with a court reporter.

5) Fall 2022: Approval of a soybean crushing plant in Casselton, despite citizen concerns about noise and traffic and opposition from Tharaldson Ethanol plant.

6) Winter 2021-2023: Rural residents of Grand Forks fight a Chinese Corn Mill due to concerns over national security and the environment. Concerns were not taken seriously by any elected official until the United States Air Force sent a letter to the local governments about its concerns relating to the plant and the impacts it could have on national security. It is likely that without the Airforce stepping in, the concerns of local people would have been ignored.

7) 2016-2024: Abuse of power by the Sargent County Water Board regarding Drain Project 11 (no public vote). Landowners rights were restored after arguing in front of the Supreme Court.

History often repeats. We are seeing some of the same elitist behavior from politicians in North Dakota that Townley saw in politicians like Treadwell Twitchell. And we are seeing a similar reaction to such behavior—people are rising up to challenge the elite in power.

Inspired by Townley's response to elite control, citizens are resisting encroachments on local autonomy by doing the following:

1. Holding power to account: Push back against legislative, administrative, and corporate interference.
2. Using the ballot box and courts: this include city and county resolutions, recall attempts on bad politicians, legal challenges to attacks on local control and property rights, and demands for resignations of especially egregious politicians or bureaucrats.
3. Organizing and running for office: ordinary citizens are organizing and preparing for future elections to challenge those who disregard their concerns, and in some cases running for office themselves.

The fact that North Dakotans are rising up is a good thing. People are waking up to the fact that a small group of people in the Capitol Building want to control everything from how counties can zone for CAFOs to what kinds of “economic development” is coming to a given county. DRC is committed to continuing our longstanding work in rural North Dakota to make sure local control remains intact. It is the belief of DRC that local people should have the agency to determine how their area is developed.

At this moment rural North Dakotans should not listen to Treadwell Twitchell and just “go home and slop the hogs”, North Dakotans should ‘organize’, and the Dakota Resource Council is here to help in the fight.

CO2 PIPELINE

Legal Battles Mount as Emmons and Burleigh Counties Resist Summit Carbon Pipeline

The Summit Carbon Pipeline continues to face legal challenges, with Emmons County and Burleigh County taking steps to oppose its construction. Emmons County Commission has voted unanimously to file a legal challenge against the North Dakota Public Service Commission's ruling, asserting that state law overrides local zoning ordinances regarding pipeline routes. The commission has hired attorney Derrick Braaten to represent them in this matter, with an appeal expected to be filed imminently in South Central District Court. They argue that the PSC's decision undermines local authority in siting pipelines and constitutes legislative overreach.

Burleigh County Commission has also petitioned the PSC to reconsider its decision regarding local ordinances, indicating a willingness to take legal action depending on the outcome. Both counties have passed ordinances imposing stricter regulations on pipeline routes than state regulations allow. The PSC contends that state law supersedes these local ordinances.

(STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)