

Testimony of Craig Headland
North Dakota House Representative District 29
Jamestown Reservoir Cabin Owners Association Board Member

House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Water, Power & Oceans
July 11, 2018

Greetings, my name is Craig Headland. I am here today representing the Jamestown Reservoir Cabin Owners Association. Our Association is made up of 71 permit holders who have permanent cabins along the shores of the Jamestown Reservoir located in Jamestown, ND. We wish to be recorded in strong support of H.R. 6039.

The Jamestown Cabin Owners Association would like to express our deep gratitude to Congressman Kevin Cramer for his sponsorship of this legislation and both he and Senator John Hoeven for their thoughtful support throughout this process.

The Jamestown Reservoir (the river) has served Jamestown and the surrounding region since 1953 when it was first placed into service. It has since become a major outdoor recreation destination for area residents. The reservoir amasses 11 miles of water and shoreline with two public marinas, two public beaches, two full-service campgrounds, and six public access points. Continued access to the river is important to everyone in the region for both recreation and the economic vitality of our community.

The Jamestown Cabin Owners have been seeking to purchase the lots on which our cabins are located for decades. We have the support of our city, county, state and federal elected officials as well as the Bureau of Reclamation, the local Park Board and the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. We have met with representatives from each of these groups on numerous occasions and can share with you that there has been no opposition expressed as we present this request to you. The Jamestown Cabin Owners Association has taken very seriously the varied interests and concerns of all stakeholders. Our process has been transparent and thorough, providing opportunity for open discussion with all parties and as a result, you can be assured that this request will not disrupt the current users' ability to use or access the river in any way, now or in the future.

Throughout the past 60 years, cabin permit holders have been important stewards of our land. We take pride in not only the ownership of our homes, but also the manner in which we steward the land on and around which our homes reside. We have invested in protecting the shoreline, cared for the landscape, and have provided a more attractive place for visitors to enjoy. For most of us, our home is our greatest investment and asset. Passage of this bill would provide us with certainty as we make the necessary improvements to maintain our homes and the land on and around them. Passage of H.R. 6039 would provide assurance to the cabin owners that our investment in these initiatives is secure, and would protect us from the uncertain tax and permit assessments that we have experienced in recent years. Many of the cabin owners are on fixed incomes and the volatility that comes with this uncertainty makes planning difficult.

It is important to note that the cabin owners pay property taxes to Stutsman County and the Jamestown School District for the assessed value of our homes. Additionally, we pay an annual permit fee to the park department. These funds have been used to help maintain the public lands, recreation areas and

access points around the river. If this bill is approved, we will pay additional property taxes for the assessed value of our land, further benefitting our community.

In conclusion, we request your support of H.R. 6039 allowing the Jamestown Cabin Owners to acquire the land on which their cabins have resided for the past 60 years. Doing so provides us with certainty of our continued use without changing utilization of the river and its surrounding public access areas in any way. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to answering your questions.