

**Sixty-fifth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota  
In Regular Session Commencing Tuesday, January 3, 2017**

SENATE BILL NO. 2047  
(Legislative Management)  
(Water Topics Overview Committee)

AN ACT to amend and reenact subsection 2 of section 61-16.1-09 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the authority of water resource boards to exercise the power of quick take eminent domain.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

**SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Subsection 2 of section 61-16.1-09 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

2. Exercise the power of eminent domain ~~in the manner provided by~~ as follows:
  - a. Except as permitted under subdivision b, the board shall comply with title 32 for the purpose of acquiring and securing by eminent domain any rights, titles, interests, estates, or easements necessary or proper to carry out the duties imposed by this chapter, and particularly to acquire the necessary rights in land for the construction of dams, flood control projects, and other water conservation, distribution, and supply works of any nature and to permit the flooding of lands, and to secure the right of access to such dams and other devices and the right of public access to any waters impounded thereby. Provided, however, that when
  - b. (1) If the interest sought to be acquired is an easement for a right of way for any project authorized in this chapter for which federal or state funds have been appropriated made available, the district, after making a written offer to purchase the right of way and depositing may acquire the right of way by quick take eminent domain as authorized by section 16 of article I of the Constitution of North Dakota, after the district attempts to purchase the easement for the right of way by:
    - (a) Conducting informal negotiations for not less than sixty days.
    - (b) If informal negotiations fail, the district shall engage in formal negotiations by:
      - [1] Sending the landowner an appraisal and written offer for just compensation, which includes a specific description of the exact location of the right of way, by certified mail or commercial delivery requiring a signed receipt, and receiving the signed receipt or documentation of constructive notice.
      - [2] Sending the landowner a written request for a meeting by certified mail or commercial delivery requiring a signed receipt if there is no agreement regarding compensation or no response to the written offer within fifteen days of receipt, and receiving the signed receipt or documentation of constructive notice.
      - [3] Sending the landowner a written notice, by certified mail or commercial delivery requiring a signed receipt, of intent to take possession of the right of way if there is no agreement regarding compensation or no response to the written request for a meeting within thirty days of receipt, and receiving the signed receipt or documentation of constructive notice.

- (2) Any written communication to the landowner must include contact information for responding to the board and a description of the required negotiation timeline.
- (3) A district may not include or utilize any reference to quick take eminent domain during negotiations to acquire the necessary easement for a right of way. If formal negotiation efforts fail, the district shall request approval from the board of county commissioners of the county in which the right of way is located to take possession of the right of way by quick take eminent domain. After receiving the request, the county commissioners shall hold a public meeting and give the landowner thirty days' notice of the meeting to allow the landowner to attend. After receiving verification from the district that there has been no reference or threat of quick take eminent domain by the district during negotiations, the commissioners shall vote on whether to approve the taking of the easement for a right of way using quick take eminent domain. If the county commissioners approve the use of quick take eminent domain by a majority vote, the district may take immediate possession of the right of way, but not a blanket easement, if the district files an affidavit by the chairman of the water resource board which states the district has fulfilled the required negotiation steps and deposits the amount of the written offer with the clerk of the district court of the county wherein which the right of way is located, may thereupon take immediate possession of the right of way, as authorized by section 16 of article I of the Constitution of North Dakota.
- (4) Within thirty days after notice has been given in writing to the landowner by the clerk of the district court that a deposit has been made for the taking of a right of way as authorized in this subsection, the owner of the property taken may appeal to the district court by serving a notice of appeal upon the acquiring agency, and the matter must be tried at the next regular or special term of court with a jury unless a jury be waived, in the manner prescribed for trials under chapter 32-15.
- (5) If ownership of a right of way has not terminated, ownership of a right of way acquired under this subdivision terminates automatically when the district no longer needs the right of way for the purpose for which it was acquired.

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President of the Senate

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Speaker of the House

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Secretary of the Senate

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Chief Clerk of the House

This certifies that the within bill originated in the Senate of the Sixty-fifth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota and is known on the records of that body as Senate Bill No. 2047.

Senate Vote:    Yeas 41            Nays 4            Absent 2

House Vote:    Yeas 90            Nays 2            Absent 2

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Secretary of the Senate

Received by the Governor at \_\_\_\_\_ M. on \_\_\_\_\_, 2017.

Approved at \_\_\_\_\_ M. on \_\_\_\_\_, 2017.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor

Filed in this office this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2017,

at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_\_ M.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of State