

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I am Rick Fox, a rancher/landowner in District 30, Custer County. I ask for your support with a YES vote to pass HB 1208. Local control is good government and this would untie the hands of our assessors.

Prior to the passage of HB 1325 in 2022, I had the county assessors office come look at our property for evaluation purposes. We spent 5 hours driving around taking pictures and explaining why we thought a lot of our land that was being taxed as crop land should be moved to non-crop land. One of the comments from one of the individuals from the assessors office at the end of the day was, "I haven't seen any part of your place that should be considered cropland".

I spent a lot of time that Spring and Summer going through the soil types and taking more pictures on each parcel. After compiling all of this, I submitted it to our county assessor to contest our assessments. Basically what happened was some of my cropland assessments were lowered, but the multiplying factor on my non-cropland was raised so the total assessment was still the same.

After passage of HB 1325 in 2022 I asked for an adjustment again with the response that it will take 5 years before the assessors office can go through all the soil types on the Class 4 soils. The main argument was the the DOR 'guidelines'. The guideline was that if there is 1 acre of land in Custer County with a soil type ABC (example) that was farmed, than all ABC soil in Custer County was to be left at cropland status no matter what.

I encourage a YES vote and pass this bill.

Thank You,

Rick Fox