

## **NEBRASKA TAXPAYERS FOR FREEDOM SPEECH TO PAPIO NRD BOARD ON FY 2023-2024 BUDGET.**

Good afternoon. Doug Kagan, 416 South 130 Str., speaking for NE Taxpayers for Freedom. Every year that we analyze your budget, we see the same financial manipulations, whereby the NRD appropriates a sum for a program or project, spends only a portion of it, then carries the remainder over to the next fiscal year while adding a new, hefty appropriation for the new fiscal year, resulting in a bloated budget. The district spent only 49% of its total FY 2023 appropriations and carried over a whopping balance of almost \$25 million. This appropriation stacking requires a higher property tax requirement than necessary. The \$1 million plus in interest income again shows that accrued revenues not spent in a timely manner. We suggest implementing zero-based budgeting in each department.

The NRD continues to spend taxpayer dollars on wasteful and unnecessary expenditures. The main purpose of the NRD originally was to prevent catastrophic flooding and subsequent property damage and loss of life along the watershed, but the NRD management and board continually have expanded the scope of their responsibilities to include non-basic programs like Celebrate Trees, trade shows, special events, exhibits, and displays. Cutting non-necessities from the budget should afford a sizeable property tax decrease. Your personnel salary increases are much higher than equivalent public salary increases elsewhere. Your inflated sums of cash on hand actually surpass the total amount of property taxes collected. Available federal grant money is decreasing, so the NRD should not plan ventures dependent upon this source of revenue.

The NRD underestimated the overall increase in valuations, 4.5%. Douglas Co. valuations likely to increase by about 9%-10%. Thus, your revenue will increase accordingly, which would allow the lowering of your tax rate.

The NRD spends so much on dam repairs, over \$1.1 million, that you should stop the effort to build additional dams. This reckless dam funding unnecessarily confiscates private property and productive farm land, creating lakes not fit for swimming or fishing for healthy fish.

Thank you.

