

Williston Herald

Landowners ask for greater well setback

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By Jerry Burnes | [2 comments](#)

Landowners crowded into the Capitol on Thursday to voice their support for Senate Bill 2206 to the Senate Natural Resources Committee — a bill that would increase the minimum setback for wells near people's homes.

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Bill Bowman (R-Bowman) would increase the setback to 750 feet from 500 feet, unless landowners and the North Dakota Industrial Commission agree to a shorter distance.



Wells are closing in. Photo by Jerry Burnes, Williston Herald

A release from the **Dakota Resource Council** named two of the landowners speaking in support of the bill as Frank Leppell of McKenzie County and Theodora Bird Bear of Mandaree.

Both suggested the setback be moved to a quarter mile, or 1,320 feet, nearly double of what the bill already calls for.

“I’ve worked in oil fields. I’ve seen oil fires. I’ve put out oil well fires,” Leppell said. “And with the modern technology we have now, there is no reason they have to put these so close to people’s homes.”

Sen. Stan Lyson (R-Williston), chair of the committee, said in an email response that no action was taken on the bill, and the committee will seek further information.

Lyson said there are complications with changing the setback but the landowners’ concerns are being heard by the committee.

“There is many problems with changing the setback rule, and we understand the problems brought forth by the landowners,” Lyson said.

The bill was co-sponsored by Sen. John Andrist (R-Crosby), David O’Connell (D-Lansford), John Warner (D-Ryder), Rep. Gary Sukut (R-Williston) and Rep. Bob Hunsker (D-Newburg).