

**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA**

NEWS RELEASE

Tuesday, November 1, 2005

Public Service Commissioners Clark, Wefald and Cramer

****For Immediate Release****

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Grain Piles Hit All-time High

The extent of slow rail service to North Dakota agricultural producers is highlighted by statistics released today by the state Public Service Commission. As of the end of October, total licensed ground storage capacity in the state is 28.5 million bushels. This far exceeds the previous high of 18 million bushels set in November 2003.

“It is a pretty simple equation,” said Public Service Commissioner Tony Clark. “Slow rail service, plus decent crop yields, equals big ground piles at North Dakota’s elevators. Considering the exceptionally high rail rates we pay compared to the rest of the nation, it would be nice if we had the service to match. Unfortunately, we do not.”

The PSC licenses 307 grain storage warehouses in the state, with a total capacity of over 218 million bushels. Another 94 storage warehouses are licensed by the federal government, with a total capacity of over 65 million. Whenever grain warehouses expand their storage capacity, they must receive approval from their licensing jurisdiction. The 28.5 million bushels of licensed ground storage includes both state and federally licensed facilities.

“Shipping delays are becoming a chronic concern in North Dakota,” said Commissioner Susan Wefald. “Over the last three years we have now had the two highest ground storage years on record. This can cause quality loss concerns, as well as making it more difficult for shippers to market their crops.”

PSC statistics indicate that requests for ground storage capacity increases are coming from locations throughout the state. However, the biggest increase is coming from southeast North Dakota.

“The good news is that we are hearing reports of good yields from the predominant corn and soybean growing regions of North Dakota,” said Commissioner Kevin Cramer. “The bad news is that slow rail service in North Dakota is too often becoming a bottleneck standing between our farmers and the markets they want to serve.”

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A ground storage statistics report is attached to this release

PSC Grain Elevator Statistics Report

Since August 1, 2005, the Commission has received and processed 75 capacity increase requests totaling 20,295,369 bushels.

As of October 31, 2005, there are 307 state licensed warehouses and 94 federal licensed warehouses. These 401 warehouses have a combined capacity of 284,171,132 bushels. The state licensed capacity totals 218,301,432 bushels including 21.4 million bushels of approved ground storage. The federal licensed capacity totals 65,869,700 bushels including 7.1 million bushels of approved ground storage.

This year's approved ground storage totaling 28.5 million bushels exceeds the record high of nearly 18 million bushels of approved ground storage in early November 2003.

