



Former Governor Schafer: FM Diversion project out of control and unaffordable

Monday, April 22, 2019 1:10 p.m. CDT by Don Haney



Former North Dakota Governor Ed Schafer Photo: KFGO News

FARGO, N.D. (KFGO) - Former Governor Ed Schafer of Fargo says the FM Diversion is "out of control and getting unaffordable to

taxpayers.”

Schafer sent a letter, obtained by KFGO News, to three state representatives prior to House passage of last Friday’s water budget bill that included a \$750 million state commitment to the diversion, \$120 million short of the amount the Diversion Authority and Governor Burgum sought.

He blasted the design, which changed, claiming it increased the project costs dramatically, now estimated at \$2.75 billion. He says the design change, “was done solely so Fargo could expand its footprint in the future.” He went on to say the project is being “steam-rolled” with no interest by the Diversion Authority to consider alternatives, reduce costs, or consider the loss of productive land and the tax base of upstream communities that will be impacted by the project. Schafer said it seems the project is moving toward a “back hole” financially and recommended lawmakers add \$100,000 to the bill for a cost reduction study.

Following the record 2009 Red River flood, Schafer led a group of local business leaders, including Doug Burgum, to convince Fargo and the Corps of Engineers to drop a plan for a flood wall similar to Grand Forks, in favor of a diversion concept.

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