

Testimony Prepared for the
House Appropriations Committee
Education and Environment Division

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RE: Engrossed SB 2020 – Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute Budget

Mr. Chairman and Appropriations Committee members, my name is Genny Dienstmann with the ND Association of Counties and within this association, I also serve as the Executive Director of the ND Association of County Engineers and Highway Superintendents. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute's (UGPTI) budget.

The UGPTI Study has been and continues to be a significant resource used by our County Highway Departments statewide to assist with county planning and budgeting for our transportation systems. The technical data helps identify priority local road projects and the fiscal commitment needed to invest in these roads, which are impacted by industries in the areas of commodities, energy and agriculture.

The Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute Roads Study has also been used as a basis to calculate the distribution of county road funds allocated by the North Dakota legislature. It is also used to assist county engineers and highway superintendents with prioritizing their county road capital improvement plans.

The Geographic Roadway Inventory Tool, also known as GRIT, has been an essential tool to assist in tracking and reporting county road data in one succinct program. With legislative approved funding to enhance the program last session, GRIT has become the central road database for our counties and this data is also used by UGPTI, NDDOT and the Legislature.

The ND Association of County Engineers appreciates the partnership with the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute and the support the Local Roads Study and GRIT Program provides to our local Highway Departments. This information is essential to proactively address the transportation needs of our state. We strongly support the budget of UGPTI. Thank you.