



November 9, 2021

FMWF Chamber Support for SB 2345

Chairman Delzer and members of the House Appropriations Committee,

For the record, my name is Katherine Grindberg and I serve as the Vice President of Public Policy for the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo (FMWF) Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber's mission is to be a catalyst for economic growth and prosperity for businesses, members, and the greater community. Today, on behalf of our over 1,900 members, I offer testimony in support of Senate Bill 2345.

Workforce is the number one issue hindering our regional, state and national economies from exponential growth and prosperity. Our Chamber remains committed to the exploration of innovative and effective strategies to address the local workforce shortage. For example, on October 12th, 2021 the FMWF Chamber launched Ignite FMWF, a new workforce strategy designed to drive continued success for our region through the combination of an intentional relationship development strategy and a robust technology platform to meaningfully engage businesses with the current and future talent pipelines. We are grateful to have already garnered public and private support for this initiative, however our region desperately needs more resources dedicated to creative solutions like this workforce infrastructure initiative.

We are extremely concerned to have learned that preexisting private investment and other existing workforce programs like Ignite FMWF may not be eligible to receive the \$1 to \$4 match illustrated in Section 1, subsection 38 of the bill. We are aware ND Commerce is further looking into this concern regarding state law of matching funds, however we fear this unclear interpretation may cause the disqualification of existing workforce programs, eroding the success of pre-emptive solutions to addressing North Dakota's biggest issue. We don't want communities like ours that are already working on creative solutions and garnering local resource support to be penalized. Today, I respectfully ask this committee to consider possible amendments that could ensure the state's approval for existing dollars.



We are grateful that workforce initiatives are a funding priority for these ARPA dollars as it continues to be the top concern we hear from all of our businesses. Workforce funding for career workforce academies as well as local matching grants are vital to the success of not only the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo metro but the entire state.

Following a possible amendment addressing the matching grants' use of preexisting funds, we ask the committee to give SB 2345 a DO PASS recommendation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will now stand for any questions from the committee.

Respectfully,

Katherine Grindberg

Vice President of Public Policy

FMWF Chamber of Commerce

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