

# North Dakota

## Travel Alliance Partnership

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### MEMBERS

America's Best Value  
Inn & Suites  
Basin Electric  
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Bismarck Airport  
Bismarck-Mandan CVB  
Bottineau Area Chamber of  
Commerce  
Destination Marketing  
Association of North Dakota  
Devils Lake CVB  
Dickinson CVB  
Eastbay Campground  
Fargo Air Museum  
Fargo-Moorhead CVB  
Friends of Lake Sakakawea  
Greater Grand Forks CVB  
Hampton Inn & Suites Minot  
Airport  
Jamestown Tourism  
Leistikow Park Campground  
Lone Butte Ranch/Log Cabin  
Vacations  
McKenzie County Tourism  
Minot Convention & Visitors  
Bureau  
Missouri Valley Heritage Alliance/  
Fort Abraham Lincoln  
Foundation  
Municipal Airport Authority  
of the City of Fargo  
National Hospitality Services  
Newman Outdoor Advertising  
Norsk Hostfest Association  
North Dakota Association of  
Rural Electric Cooperatives  
North Dakota State Fair  
North Dakota Tourism Division  
(ex-officio)  
Odney  
Rocky Mountain International  
Roosevelt Park Zoo  
State Historical Society of  
North Dakota Foundation  
Theodore Roosevelt Medora  
Foundation  
Valley City CVB/Sheyenne RV  
Scenic Byway  
Vern's Rental  
Williston CVB

### Testimony of Sheri Grossman

Travel Alliance Partnership

### In Opposition to SB 2296 & SB 2310

February 9, 2021

Chair Bell and members of the Senate Finance and Taxation Committee:

My name is Sheri Grossman, CEO of the Bismarck-Mandan Convention and Visitors Bureau, representing the North Dakota Travel Alliance Partnership (TAP). TAP is a coalition of travel industry stakeholders, including CVBs, state attractions, businesses and other interested stakeholders, in this viable and growing sector of North Dakota's economy.

The impact of COVID has not only decimated our travel industry, but also caused economic strain throughout North Dakota. Local attractions, venues, hotels, restaurants, and visitor bureaus have all suffered huge losses in revenue resulting in layoffs, and in some communities, business closures. Overall, tourism in the United States declined by 42 percent in 2020, resulting in \$492 billion in lost tax revenue.

SB 2296 and SB 2310 would cause further harm to our industry which is still reeling from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It would place a statewide limit on the number of electronic pull tab devices (etabs) allowed to operate in North Dakota, forcing organizations to retire their current fleet of devices. This would result in lost revenue for convention and visitor bureaus (CVBs), tourism foundations, bars and restaurants, hotels, and charitable organizations. Further, by limiting the number of available etab devices in North Dakota, revenue for CVBs and charitable organizations would essentially be capped as they would be prohibited from deploying additional devices.

These bills also stipulate that only hand-held etab devices would be allowed to operate in North Dakota. This change would retire hundreds of cabinet-style machines that are currently in place at hotels, bars and other popular tourism destinations across North Dakota.

SB 2296 and SB 2310 would also eliminate bar-assist redemption for etab credit vouchers.

Currently, some organizations rely on bar staff to redeem vouchers, which allows organizations to have machines open at times when a full gaming site is not in operation. The Williston Convention and Visitors Bureau, for example, has two sites that rely on bar-assist redemption. By removing bar-assist redemption, some organizations would be forced to either remove etabs from businesses entirely or hire staff to monitor and redeem vouchers.

Convention and visitor bureaus (CVB's) play an important role in marketing communities and their businesses. They serve as cheerleaders for tourist attractions, restaurants, hotels and businesses, generating revenue in the communities in which they serve. SB 2296 and SB 2310 would jeopardize our region's CVB's and their funding, causing further harm to communities

and tourism attractions that are still contending with the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The North Dakota Travel Alliance Partnership strongly opposes SB 2296 and SB 2310 and urges the Senate Finance and Taxation Committee recommend a do not pass recommendation for both bills.