HB1097
North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department
Government and Veterans Affairs Committee
Rm 216, 9:00
Friday, February 19, 2021

Good morning Mr. Chairman, members of the committee; my name is Andrea Travnicek, Director of the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department. I am testifying on behalf of the Department in support of HB1097 relating to the state parks gift fund, and to provide a continuing appropriation.

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department (NDPRD) has had a gift fund for over thirty years. The fund was established with one substantial gift in mind. This donation was the Gunlogson Trust associated with Icelandic State Park. The agency didn't have a way to ensure the funds would be spent in accordance with the gift, so this fund was established. Since then, the Department has received donations of various sizes from friends' groups, private companies, and endowment funds through the North Dakota Community Foundation. Entities use the gift fund as a way to invest in North Dakota's state parks.

Over the years, the Department has received conflicting interpretations related to the authority and the continuing appropriation ability. With this language, the Department would have clarity on the use of the fund. As more entities are looking for ways to invest in North Dakota state parks, the Department would like to have clear guidance on the fund.

The proposed language changes identified in HB1097 would continue to allow individuals, and other entities, a way to invest in North Dakota State Parks while providing clear guidance and flexibility for the Department on expenditures from the fund.

Furthermore, the changes would provide a reporting requirement to OMB and the approval of the emergency commission and the legislative assembly for any expenditure in excess of fifty thousand dollars from funds the donor has not designated.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my remarks; I would be pleased to answer any questions that the committee may have. Thank you for your time and consideration.