

Testimony in support of Senate Bill 2301

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Dear members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am respectfully submitting written testimony in favor of Senate Bill 2301 – which stands to put North Dakota workers first in the renewable energy industry. I live in District 39 and Sen. Dale Patten represents me and hundreds of construction workers in the area.

I am a lifelong Bowman County resident and have chosen to work in the construction industry because of great wages and benefits and flexibility of acquiring new jobs skills on projects across the state. Two years ago I was fortunate to get on with the Laborers International Union of North America Local 563. My first project was to inspect and coat miles of pipeline sitting near Gascoyne, ND that was marked for the Keystone XL project.

At this stage in my career, I want to stay in North Dakota, build North Dakota projects and be close to my family. I want to know that state agency leaders, legislators and contractors are looking at North Dakota workers first during the hiring process. North Dakota citizens are our greatest asset. For years when the oil boom brought in thousands of workers, we didn't have to worry about finding something locally. But as our energy industry – all aspects of it – ebbs and flows with the markets, there are years where jobs become more scarce. For more than five years, we need to make local workers a priority.

I grew up on a farm and understand the importance of protecting land – our more precious resource. I personally wouldn't want our land left a mess after a windfarm, solar farm or other energy-related project were built. As a construction worker I take great pride in my work as do my coworkers.

Please consider committee passage of this bill for current workers and future generations of workers that want to stay, work and raise families in the state.

Thank you.

Kaya Abrahamson

