



March 13, 2025

Chairman Nathe and members of the House Appropriations Education and Environment Division,

My name is Emily Bivens, and I serve as the Executive Director of Jamestown Tourism. I'm writing to ask for your support for Senate Bill 2018, which includes funding for North Dakota's Tourism Division.

In the last session, your committee allocated \$25 million for Destination Development Grants. This program was a success, but demand far exceeded the available funds. This session, SB 2018 proposes reducing that funding to \$20 million. We respectfully ask you to restore it to at least \$25 million to continue supporting projects that attract visitors and grow tourism in our state.

Additionally, we ask for an increase in tourism marketing funding from \$7 million to \$10 million. With the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library opening in 2026, North Dakota will receive national attention. Expanding our marketing budget would help us reach new audiences and bring more visitors to Medora and destinations across the state.

We also request that marketing funds be included in the Commerce Department's base budget, rather than treated as one-time funding. A steady investment in marketing will provide long-term benefits for tourism and North Dakota's entire economy.

A 2023 study found that 25.6 million visitors spent \$3.3 billion in North Dakota, supporting 40,000 jobs and generating \$307 million in state and local tax revenue. With the right resources, we can build on this success and compete more effectively with neighboring states.

We respectfully ask for your support of these amendments to SB 2018. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Executive Director • Jamestown Tourism