

March 11, 2025

Chairman Headland and Members of the House Finance and Taxation Committee,

My name is Erin Haugen, and I am here today as a concerned citizen in support of **Senate Bill 2281**. I urge you to give this bill a **Do Pass** recommendation.

Tobacco use remains one of the leading causes of preventable death and disease in North Dakota. It is directly linked to heart disease, cancer, lung disease, and other serious health complications that place a heavy burden on individuals, families, and our healthcare system. As a state, we have the opportunity to take meaningful action to reduce tobacco use and protect public health.

One of the most effective ways to reduce tobacco consumption—particularly among youth—is to increase tobacco taxes. This bill proposes an increase on cigarettes, cigars, other tobacco products, alternative tobacco products, electronic smoking devices, and related substances. Studies consistently show that higher tobacco prices discourage young people from starting and motivate current users to quit. This is not just about generating revenue; it is about **saving lives and reducing long-term healthcare costs**.

The passage of **Senate Bill 2281** would be a step toward a healthier North Dakota. By supporting this bill, you are choosing to prioritize public health, reduce tobacco-related illnesses, and lessen financial strain on our healthcare system. I respectfully ask for your support in passing this critical legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Erin Haugen

Concerned Citizen, Grand Forks, ND