

March 6, 2025

House Government and Veteran Affairs Committee  
Honorable Austen Schauer, Chair  
North Dakota State Capitol, Pioneer Room

RE: SB 2048 – Support testimony presented by Corey Mock, Chief Information Officer

Chairman Schauer and members of the House GVA Committee:

SB 2048 is one of two cautionary tales that will be before you yet this morning.

This bill was originally introduced as agency clean-up legislation – a modest change that would align NDCC with current procedures and best practices. Rest assured SB 2048 still accomplishes this underlying task, but our journey has been anything but dull.

Statewide IT planning has been part of North Dakota statutes since our information technology department was created in 1999. At the time, agencies would create their own IT plans, present them to NDIT by specific dates in even numbered years, and those plans would be compiled into a single statewide plan. Budgeting for the upcoming biennium would consider the statewide IT plan, especially when it came to large IT project requests.

The dates and requirements evolved over the last 25 years, with the most recent version leading to an August deadline before the final report is produced.

NDCC 54-59-11 currently describes an IT planning process that was appropriate in 1999 but is a significant departure from modern IT planning and development.

Proper IT planning requires more frequent discussion and assessment of needs. Whereas current law relies on an IT plan that reflects a point in time during a 2-year period, our updated language creates flexibility and aligns with continuous oversight and accountability.

Governor Kelly Armstrong has made it a priority that we challenge assumptions, update our processes, and amend (or remove) statutes no longer needed.

SB 2048 is a modest rewrite of our statewide IT planning process that empowers NDIT to work with all state agencies on a regular basis and maintain an ever evolving and fully transparent statewide IT plan. No deadlines or bound reports to collect dust on the shelf. SB 2048 requires executive branch agencies to work with NDIT to create and maintain a plan that emphasizes agency strategic goals, business objectives, and aligns to statewide IT initiatives.

Today, NDIT provides an IT dashboard which shows progress on IT projects, including recent milestones, current objectives, and overall performance relative to the budget and timeline.

We have also developed steering and planning committees with various agencies to assist NDIT with our intake process and project prioritization. As new projects come forward, they join the discussion and are slotted for work based on objective criteria.

Our companion bill, SB 2049, also rewrites sections related to major IT project oversight. Amendments came forward at different times for both bills. Upon further discussion, we would suggest that section 2 of SB 2048 be removed at this time. This section was added by the Senate with the belief it would no longer be necessary once we changed the definition of major IT projects. NDCC 54-59-11.1 requires each agency to coordinate with NDIT when considering any IT project with an estimated cost of \$100,000 or more. While we work with agencies on a regular basis, retaining this section of code retains a basic requirement that agencies touch base with NDIT before investing \$100,000 or more on an IT initiative. It may not require additional involvement, but it gives NDIT the ability to review their IT needs, understand what the agency is attempting to accomplish, and consult on solutions that may already exist or could be used by other agencies with similar needs.

NDIT supports SB 2048. For the time being, we believe it's worth retaining ND 54-59-11.1 and would therefore recommend that section 2 be removed by this committee.