



Good morning, Chairman Patten and members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Dennis Pathroff. I'm a lobbyist with the GA Group and here today representing the Power Companies of North Dakota ("PCND").

PCND is a coalition of the state's leading shareholder-owned gas and electric utilities. Our members include MDU Resources Group, Xcel Energy, Otter Tail Power Company, and ALLETE. Together, PCND members serve over 427,000 North Dakota customers, employ over 1,200 North Dakotans, and manage significant power generation and transmission infrastructure across our state.

Today, I express PCND's strong support for HB 1258, which transfers sole authority for siting electric transmission to the Public Service Commission. This change makes sense for several reasons:

- **Objective Oversight** – Unlike counties and townships, which often face localized pressures, the PSC provides an impartial, statewide perspective. The PSC's decisions prioritize public interest and the long-term value of projects for all North Dakotans.
- **Expertise and Resources** – The PSC has access to technical staff and participates in regional partnerships, ensuring projects align with both state and broader regional energy needs. Local governments may lack the necessary resources to evaluate these complex projects effectively.
- **Economic and Reliability Benefits** – Improved transmission infrastructure not only supports economic growth by attracting new businesses, but it also enhances grid reliability, helping prevent outages during extreme weather. Counties and townships may not fully recognize or plan for these far-reaching benefits.

HB 1258 also brings electric transmission siting into alignment and provides parity with the existing siting process for gas and liquid pipelines, ensuring consistency and fairness.

Behind me are subject matter experts from our member companies who can provide detailed insights on the current process and the benefits HB 1258 will bring. PCND urges a "Do Pass" recommendation on this critical legislation.

Thank you, Chairman Patten and committee members, for your time and consideration.