



March 6, 2025

Chairman Patten and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 1592, which proposes important updates to modernize and streamline the Lignite Research Council (LRC). The LRC was created in 1987, before the establishment of similar research councils for oil and gas and renewable energy, and it is time to align its policies and structure with modern energy research and development frameworks reflected in the Century Code.

This bill updates the LRC's language and governance structure to better reflect current practices and to align with the provisions guiding the Oil and Gas Research Council and the Renewable Energy Council. It also clarifies the relationship between the LRC and the North Dakota Industrial Commission (NDIC), ensuring transparent processes for consultation and funding decisions. These changes aim to improve administrative efficiency, foster collaboration, and ensure the council can continue its vital work supporting the lignite industry.

The bill further defines key priorities for LRC activities, including supporting projects that preserve jobs, foster economic growth, and develop innovative uses for lignite, such as advancing products and ensuring efficient reclamation practices. Additionally, it emphasizes transparency while protecting proprietary information for those engaging with the LRC's programs.

Modernizing the LRC's framework is essential to maintaining its effectiveness as a driver of innovation and economic opportunity for North Dakota's lignite industry. I respectfully urge the committee to support this bill with a "Do Pass" recommendation to ensure the LRC remains a valuable asset in advancing North Dakota's energy goals.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jonathan Fortner
VP of Government Relations
Lignite Energy Council