

**Testimony of Cole Higlin
North Dakota Recreation & Park Association
To Senate State and Local Government
In Support to HB 1198
Friday, March 7, 2025**

Chair Roers and members of the Committee, my name is Cole Higlin, and I am the public policy chair of the North Dakota Recreation & Park Association (NDRPA). We represent more than 900 members, primarily park districts, and work to advance parks, recreation and conservation for an enhanced quality of life in North Dakota.

On behalf of North Dakota's park districts, I express support for House Bill 1198 which provides clarity as to how park districts are allowed to engage in cooperative purchasing. This legislation addresses the challenges park districts face in securing cost-effective goods and services by streamlining the purchasing process and expanding opportunities for savings.

HB 1198 clarifies that park districts do not need a joint powers agreement to access cooperative purchasing contracts through the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), making it easier and faster for districts to utilize these contracts.

Additionally, the bill grants park districts the authority to participate in cooperative purchasing agreements established by other states, allowing them to tap into broader vendor options and potential discounts, such as Sourcewell which is through Minnesota.

Importantly, the bill also retains and clarifies the option for park districts to enter into joint powers agreements with other political subdivisions.

By removing administrative barriers, enhancing access to cooperative purchasing contracts, and preserving flexibility, HB 1198 will help park districts save taxpayer dollars, improve efficiency, and better serve their communities.

I strongly urge your support for this bill and would be happy to answer any questions.