



March 16, 2021

Mr. David Monson Chairman,
House Appropriations – Education and Finance Division
600 E. Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505

RE: (SB 2018) Amendment relating to UAS training

Chairman Monson and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Williston Economic Development office to express our full support of Senate Bill 2018 specifically the amendment that dedicates grant funding for expanding workforce opportunities, training and education related to the beyond visual line of sight UAS industry.

The introduction of the Vantis network into Western North Dakota provides the area prime opportunities on two facets: The ability to reduce costs and increase efficiencies within the oil and gas industry and the introduction of a diversified industry to limit the ups and downs related to an economy dependent on commodity prices.

As Vantis continues to move forward, the Williston Economic Development office intends to take full advantage of the economic opportunity it presents. To do this, we will need skilled workforce. With an estimated 9.5% unemployment rate in Williams County we have an opportunity to capture individuals who already reside within the region.

We are the leader in the nation with Vantis and beyond visual line of site. We have opportunity to be a leader of an aggressive workforce development program for this exciting emerging industry.

On behalf of the Williston Economic Development office I respectfully request that the house appropriations education and environment division fully support SB2018 and the amendment relating to UAS training.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shawn Wenko".

Shawn Wenko
Executive Director
Williston Economic Development