



## Board of Commissioners

**Diane K. Knauf**  
Grand Forks, ND

**David Engen**  
Northwood, ND

**Cynthia Pic**  
Niagara, ND

**Tom Falck**  
Grand Forks, ND

**Bob Rost**  
Grand Forks, ND

Commissioner Tom Falck  
Grand Forks County  
PO Box 5726  
Grand Forks, ND 58206-5726

RE: SENATE BILL 2018 – A BILL FOR AN ACT TO PROVIDE AN APPROPRIATION FOR DEFRAYING THE EXPENSES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE; AND TO PROVIDE TRANSFER

Dear Chairman Holmberg and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

My name is Tom Falck, and I am a member of the Grand Forks County Board of Commissioners; I also oversee the Grand Sky Portfolio. I am writing you today in support of SB2018, specifically the Enhanced Use Lease grant line item.

On February 6, 2015, Grand Forks County executed a historic, 50-year Enhanced Use Lease with the United States Air Force, creating the nation's first commercial testing and training center devoted to the support and development of the Unmanned Aircraft Systems industry. Grand Sky has since put North Dakota on the map in the UAS sector. Grand Sky has become the model EUL for other industry to follow. The USAF cites Grand Sky as its most successful, and innovative EUL.

Without the State's investments, Grand Sky would not exist. Thanks to the State's investments, necessary infrastructure has been made available to host the two leading UAS companies in Northrop Grumman Corporation and General Atomics.

Continued investments into Grand Sky provides hundreds of jobs in North Dakota – 175 jobs at Grand Sky alone. It also means investments into North Dakota from the private sector, such as private facilities, jobs, internships, and capital assets.

Investments into Grand Sky have strengthened the Grand Forks regions, and the State's partnership with Grand Forks Air Force Base. Grand Forks County is leading the way in Public-Public-Private Partnerships that positively impact both the County and the Air Force.

Finally, investments into Grand Sky offer economic benefits to North Dakota but also create valuable protection if the base were to experience another round of base realignments and closures.





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To date, the State has generously invested \$21 million into Grand Sky. These investments have been met with \$70 million in private investments into Grand Forks County and North Dakota. This is a 3.3:1 return on investment for North Dakota.

North Dakota is the nation's leader in UAS; however, other states are quickly trying to replicate the Grand Sky model, and overtake North Dakota's position as the nation's UAS leader. It is crucial to our state's economy that the Legislature continue to invest in Grand Sky so that the State's economy diversifies and grows, securing North Dakota as the nation's UAS leader.

Sincerely,

Tom Falck  
Commissioner  
Grand Forks County