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Dickinson, ND 58601
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January 20, 2021

To: Senate appropriation Committee
Re: SB 2018 – ND Tourism Division Support

Dear Chairman Holmberg and members of the Senate appropriations Committee:

My name is Robert Fuhrman and I am the Director of the Dickinson Museum Center located in Dickinson, ND. The Dickinson Museum Center's operation includes the Joachim Regional Museum and Prairie Outpost Park, both of which focus on the history of Southwestern North Dakota, and the Badlands Dinosaur Museum which presents an evolving exhibit program of fossils and minerals, a public preparation laboratory and a vibrant research and fieldwork program.

As the gateway to North Dakota's Western Edge, Dickinson is fortunate to have attractions such as ours and, just down the road, the forthcoming Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library, to be located near one of state's great treasures, the Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Being located on Interstate 94 is of incalculable value to destinations such as these and we know from talking to our summer visitors that towns and cities all along the I-94 corridor benefit from the numerous tourists who travel throughout our great state.

We also know from our visitors how crucial it is that materials promoting North Dakota's tourist attractions get into their hands or, ever increasingly, on their screens to entice them to visit our state's unique destinations. While we are grateful for every visitor who visits North Dakota, those of us in tourism related industries and professions know that our neighbors – South Dakota, Montana and Minnesota – all regularly out-spend North Dakota on tourism promotion and all rank higher annually in terms of visitors.

The next two years present a unique opportunity to test North Dakota's ability to compete with our neighbors *if* the North Dakota Tourism Division's budget can be put on par with the tourism support in those states. As a country, we have turned a major corner in handling the Covid-19 pandemic and *we will* see visitors returning as people are excited to once again plan their vacations. Now is the time to consider an increase in tourism funding to ensure North Dakota's appeal to those potential visitors stands out from that of our neighbors.

Please support SB 2018 – ND Tourism Division's budget at \$18 million for the biennium.

Sincerely,

Robert Fuhrman
Director, Dickinson Museum Center