



January 25, 2021

Honorable Ray Holmberg
State Senator and Appropriations Committee Chair

Testimony before Senator Holmberg and Appropriations Committee Members, January 25, 2021.

Dear Senator Holmberg and Members of the Committee,

My name is Clarence Sitter and I am the President of the board of directors for the Medora Chamber of Commerce. I am writing to both personally and on behalf of the Medora business community to proudly support the Governor's proposed \$461,000 increase in the Tourism Division Budget for the Biennium that begins next summer and his proposal for an additional two-million dollars (\$2,000,000) for destination marketing.

The state increase is more vital than ever this year as businesses in Medora are continuing to deal with and recover from the impacts related to COVID-19. Specifically, reduced travel by the public in 2020 and increased costs to ensure consumer confidence negatively impacted many Medora businesses. With uncertainty continuing to surround leisure travel in 2021, specifically the summer months, and as a prime tourist destination for North Dakota, it is essential that we increase marketing for tourism recovery. Nearby states such as South Dakota have doubled down on destination marketing during the pandemic and we need to be able to compete and increase our marketing efforts. We, like our tourism partners and hospitality businesses across the state, will depend more than ever on the state's business focus, commerce grants for small businesses and the need to continue marketing efforts to assist with recovery and business growth. The increase in funding will help support marketing the state and build our image awareness.

Tourism and travel are pure forms of economic development, with visitors leaving their money behind when they return home. Tourism marketing boosts the national and international character of the entire state. We are proud to represent the state of North Dakota in Medora and we are passionate about providing a great experience to the traveling public through our various businesses. With the proper tools and funding, we can stay competitive with other states around the country and share all that it means to be ND Legendary!

Sincerely,

Clarence Sitter
President of the Board of Directors
Medora Chamber of Commerce