

**Testimony of Mr. Keith Lund**  
**Grand Forks Region Economic Development Corporation President & CEO**

**House Bill 1503**  
**House Agriculture Committee**  
**Bismarck, North Dakota – February 3, 2023**

Chairman Thomas, Vice Chairman Beltz, and members of the House Agriculture Committee. My name is Keith Lund, and I am President & CEO of the Grand Forks Region Economic Development Corporation. I am providing Grand Forks Region EDC board endorsed testimony today in opposition to HB 1503 as it relates to foreign ownership for industrial purposes.

HB 1503 provides that a foreign business entity, permanent resident or alien may not directly or indirectly acquire an ownership interest in real property in North Dakota unless the business or individual is entitled to by US treaty. There are numerous examples of foreign business entities owning and operating businesses in North Dakota. The impacts, should this legislation be adopted, will be detrimental to the Grand Forks region and for North Dakota.

Consider Cirrus Aircraft. Cirrus opened their initial manufacturing facility in Grand Forks in 1997 and is a model corporate citizen. The company is the global leader in the production and distribution of single-piston aircraft and has developed the world's first single-engine personal jet, the Vision Jet. Every composite and carbon fiber component used in the production of Cirrus aircrafts are manufactured in Grand Forks by American workers.

Cirrus was acquired by China Aviation Industry General Aircraft Company (CIAGA) in 2011. Prior to the purchase, CIAGA underwent a review by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), a federal department established specifically and exclusively to review foreign corporate acquisitions of United States companies. After this extensive review, CFIUS approved the purchase of

Cirrus, which has invested significantly in their manufacturing facility, their employees and the community.

Cirrus currently employs 430 at their Grand Forks plant, having grown their workforce from 240 over the last three years. The company has aggressive growth goals and anticipates increasing their manufacturing footprint and adding an additional 150 high-paying jobs over the next five years.

The foreign ownership restrictions contained in HB 1503 would require Cirrus to divest of its real estate holdings in Grand Forks and would likely begin the process of disinvestment in North Dakota. The livelihoods of 430 friends, neighbors and their families would be directly impacted. Community jobs will be lost, \$10 million of North Dakota procurement by Cirrus would curtail, and the region's population will be negatively impacted, causing ripple effects throughout the regional economy.

I encourage the committee to consider the impacts of this legislation on companies such as Cirrus and others across North Dakota, the State's long-standing prioritization of business accessibility, and the long-term impacts on business expansion and attraction.

Thank you, Chairman Thomas, Vice Chairman Beltz, and members of the House Agriculture Committee, for your service to North Dakota and for the opportunity to provide testimony today.