

**Written Testimony
In Opposition of
House Bill 1503**

Chairman Thomas and Vice Chairman Beltz and members of the House Agriculture Committee,

My name is Brad Barth, and I'm the Economic Development Director for the City of Devils Lake and Ramsey County, ND. I am providing testimony in opposition to House Bill 1503 regarding foreign ownership for industrial purposes.

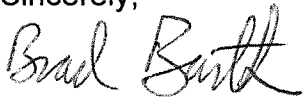
During my five years in the Economic Development role here in Devils Lake, many potential projects we have pursued have had some percentage of foreign ownership. Enough so that if this bill were to pass, I would look for another job due to the "cloud" it would put on North Dakota and our willingness to grow or, worse yet, retire early and add another unfilled position to the list of 20,000+ other jobs that are open in ND.

As a community with smaller populations than the bigger cities in the state, we really cannot "pick and choose" the companies we attract. In Devils Lake, for example, I've had multiple foreign companies interested in working with the strengths of our region, like wheat, beans, lentils, peas, sunflowers, and corn and using these commodities for value-added manufacturing products that could feed the world. Unfortunately, these companies went elsewhere, like Iowa, Illinois, Texas, Minnesota, etc., to locate their manufacturing facilities. We simply could not compete if this bill were to pass and it would reduce the number of prospects we work with in a given time significantly.

This great state has many attributes that help us to compete in the Global Economy. Please help us to expand the things that attract companies to North Dakota and not add to the things that detract organizations and workers from coming to the state.

Thank you for your consideration and opposition of House Bill 1503.

Sincerely,



Brad Barth

Executive Director

Forward Devils Lake Corporation

Economic Development organization for

City of Devils Lake and Ramsey County, ND