



North Dakota Senate

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COMMITTEES:

Appropriations - Education and Environment Division, Chairman

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HB1379, Section 2: Economic Diversification through Research Grant Program

Chairman Vigessa and members of the House Appropriations Committee,

Today, I am pleased to present testimony on the Research Section of House Bill 1379, I see this as a landmark investment in the future of North Dakota's economy.

I believe research is a worthy cause for the state to support in efforts to diversity North Dakota's economy, which will ease the burdens of volatility in energy and agriculture that affect all areas of the state.

This section of this bill creates a research grant program and advisory committee for the purpose of stimulating economic activity across the state – through the innovation of new technologies, businesses, and products in North Dakota's critical industries of value-added energy and agriculture, but also developing sectors from autonomous vehicles and UAS technologies to advanced data and healthcare.

The legislation specifies that \$10 million of Legacy Fund earnings would be transferred to the economic diversification research grant fund and 90% awarded equally between our state's two research universities, the University of North Dakota (UND) and North Dakota State University (NDSU), and the remaining 10% between the other institutions controlled by the state board of higher education.

Making a significant and predictable investment in research will:

- sustain and boost our competitive advantages in agriculture and energy, and
- produce discoveries and innovations in emerging sectors that translate into
 - new 21st century economic opportunities,
 - a more skilled workforce, and
 - higher-paying jobs for North Dakotans.

Section 4: Workforce development and enrichment fund.

This section of this bill creates a Workforce development and enrichment fund. These dollars would be appropriated in grants for the following areas. Strategic workforce development, Technical education, Workforce diversification initiatives and Workforce guidance and support.

Grants would be for one-time projects and initiatives. Grants for Capital projects must have a matching requirement.

Thirty percent of the moneys would be designated to support workforce initiatives in cities located in oil-producing counties.

Having a trained and available workforce is critical to the future growth of North Dakota and all our communities.

Would ask your support in both these sections and the programs in them. They are important to our future as a state.

Sen. Ronald Sorvaag
District 45