

Re: Testimony in Support of House Bill No. 1455,

**Representatives O'Brien, Hagert, Monson, Roers Jones, Schauer, Schreiber-Beck
Senators Kreun, Patten, J. Roers, Wanzek**

I am Kouhyar Tavakolian, the director of the Biomedical Engineering Program at the University of North Dakota. I am writing this letter in support of Bill No. 1455 relating to sales and use tax exemption for materials used in the research and development of bioscience and biotechnology and the manufacture of bioscience and biotechnology products.

The Biomedical Engineering graduate program started eight years ago and is a collaboration between the College of Engineering and Mines, and School of Medicine and Health Sciences at UND, and the College of Engineering at NDSU. Last year we launched the first undergraduate program in Biomedical Engineering in North Dakota at UND, which is based on a novel methodology of Innovation Based Learning (IBL), where students are to create value outside the walls of the classroom for their assessment of work and from their freshman year. A critical focus for the program is to encourage students to work with biotechnology and bioengineering companies in the state and to create the required workforce for a strong biotechnology sector in the state. As such, we work with several companies in this sector in the state and worked very closely with the Bioscience Association of North Dakota (BioND) to bring even more companies to ND. We know that more companies coming to North Dakota would provide better job and internship opportunities for our students at UND and NDSU.

The current Bill (No. 1455) provides certain tax exemptions to bioscience and biotechnology companies in the state and helps us add another attractive feature to our toolkit for absorbing more companies in this sector to come to North Dakota and maintain the companies we already have in the state. As such, we are in full support of this bill and find it a significant step to strengthen the biotechnology sector in the state and to diversify our economy further.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,


Feb 5th, 2022

Kouhyar Tavakolian, PhD
Associate Professor
Director, Biomedical Engineering Program
University of North Dakota