

**Testimony of Shannon Schutt  
North Dakota Recreation & Park Association  
To House Judicial Committee  
In Support to HB 1459  
Wednesday, February 8, 2023**

Chairman Klemin and members of the Committee, my name is Shannon Schutt, and I am the executive director of the North Dakota Recreation & Park Association (NDRPA). We represent more than 900 members, primarily park districts, and work to advance parks, recreation and conservation for an enhanced quality of life in North Dakota.

We are in support of adding to the list of drug offenses subject to felony charges manufacturing, delivery, or possession, with intent to manufacture or deliver a controlled substance in, on, or within 300 feet of a public park.

We would also recommend amending the bill to replace “public park” with “park property” to include all property owned by park districts: parks, open space, trails, greenways, water, recreation facilities. In these spaces, we provide programs and services that have documented benefits, among them economic, health, environmental, and social/community. Drugs and crime go together. We need to be able to protect our public spaces and implementing this law would support the effort for protection.

Providing safe recreation opportunities for our citizens and visitors is essential to maintaining North Dakota’s commitment to a high quality of life that attracts and retains workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for HB 1459 for safe areas to play and recreate.