

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Chad M. Orn, Director of Project Development for the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT). I'm here to introduce and support Senate Bill 2063.

Senate Bill 2063 would allow the NDDOT to enter into cooperative agreements with public or private entities to administer funds received from the federal government for electric vehicle (EV) charging programs such as the current National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program. The goal of this program is for states to strategically deploy EV charging infrastructure and establish an interconnected charging network throughout the states. The NDDOT will receive \$25.9M over five years to develop DC fast charging infrastructure. The initial phase will build out the two existing alternative fuel corridors (AFC's) I-29 and I-94 to full NEVI compliance by 2026. The ND EV Infrastructure Plan was approved in the fall of 2022, which allows the NDDOT to use the NEVI funds. View the complete plan at the following link www.dot.nd.gov/projects/lrtp/evplan.htm

NDDOT's intent is to create a grant program to award funding to construct, operate, administer, and maintain electric vehicle charging infrastructure in accordance with the state's NEVI plan. The program requires a match component to the federal funding of 20%. As the bill is currently written, the NDDOT cannot use state dollars to provide the match. Ultimately, NDDOT would delegate ownership of the station to those public or private entities. As of the end of January, there were 575 licensed EVs. This is close to double from the same time in 2022.

Since this bill passed the Senate, the final rule on NEVI standards and requirements was released by the Joint Office of Energy and Transportation. From our initial review, we don't see any major differences between the final rule and guidance previously provided.

The Senate did amend Section 2 of SB 2063. This section refers to a Legislative Management Study. With the release of the final rule, the ongoing stakeholder (such as utility companies) engagement strategy provided in the ND EV Infrastructure Plan, and our coordination with surrounding states on the development of the NEVI program, we respectfully ask that Section 2 of SB 2063 be removed.

This bill would give NDDOT the flexibility to work collaboratively with public or private entities, along with our power utilities and Public Service Commission to meet the goals of EV charging programs.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you.