



Bismarck-Mandan
Convention & Visitors Bureau
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March 6, 2023

Senator Brad Bekkedahl
Senate Appropriations Committee Chair

Senator Bekkedahl and Members of the Committee:

I would like to offer our support for HB 1018.

All indicators show that people want to travel, and we are back to 2019 levels or above. They will go somewhere; we need to have the funding to inspire them to choose North Dakota. If not, we are letting other states derive the benefits of the economic impact that could benefit our state.

Unfortunately, our neighboring states have always had much larger budgets than our Tourism Division; the most alarming part is that the gap is growing substantially. It is critical that our Tourism Division has adequate funding to compete with neighboring states. North Dakota cannot continue to let our neighbors capture these visitors and risk losing the economic impact that they could bring to North Dakota. It is imperative to attract this business to fill our hotels, restaurants, gas stations and stores.

The \$25 million request for a strategic marketing and workforce recruitment campaign investment in destination North Dakota awareness marketing is a significant step in the right direction. This will allow them to expand marketing channels and length of time in markets.

In addition to marketing to get visitors here, we need to have adequate offerings to aid in enticement and increase the length of stay. The funding for the Destination Development Fund will do just that. I don't think there will be any shortage of projects for Bismarck-Mandan with groups like the North Dakota Equestrian & Ag Center and Bismarck Riverfront Idea already expressing interest in exploring new venues to consider for development.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sheri J. Grossman, CDME
CEO

