8 March 2023

Senator Brad Bekkedahl
Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman ND Senate
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505

Dear Chairman Bekkedahl and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

We thank you for your commitment to the people and communities of North Dakota.

We are the Grand Forks Children's Museum Board of Directors. Our organization seeks to build a children's museum in Grand Forks. We strongly urge your support of House Bill 1018 for the full $50 million toward the North Dakota Destination Development Fund.

HB 1018 will provide the means by which so many communities across North Dakota can continue to attract and retain residents. Grand Forks is one such area. There is a significant need for cultural attractions in the Grand Forks region. A 2020 Grand Forks Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) Retail and Attractions Economic Analysis found that there is a need for cultural tourist attractions not being met. While there is a $5.2 million demand for museums, historical sites, and institutions in Grand Forks, 89% of our residents leave our community to seek out cultural entertainment elsewhere.

The Grand Forks Children's Museum seeks to be a part of this solution. The museum will provide a destination for children and families to engage in interactive STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) learning activities that highlight our unique regional industries. Workforce retention begins at an early age where children can visualize themselves in that field. Our mission is to engage minds through play.

We know that building a livable, connected community creates a sense of belongingness and makes for a vibrant community. HB 1018 provides the means to develop more vibrant communities across the state of North Dakota.

Respectfully,

Center for Exploration Board of Directors

Alex Reichart, President	Jill Nelson
Sally Miskavige, Vice President	Dean Opp
Jared Vigen, Treasurer	Kelly Quigley
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Brittany Callier	Carmen Wald