



March 1, 2023

Representative Brad Bekkedahl
House Appropriations Chair

Dear Chairman Bekkedahl and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

As the Executive Director of the Dickinson Convention & Visitors Bureau, I have been in my position for twenty-five years. During this time, I have been involved with the ND Tourism Division and their marketing efforts, partnerships, and grant opportunities. The ND Tourism Division has tremendous respect from the attractions, hospitality venues, recreational businesses, and local tourism organizations. Be assured that the dollars that are appropriated by the Legislature are well invested.

Currently, our industry has an opportunity to not only increase the ND Tourism Division's marketing budget, which is lagging in comparison to our neighboring states, but to also plant tourism seeds and watch them grow into a variety of travel experiences for North Dakota.

The support for \$25 million for strategic marketing and workforce recruitment and \$5 million one-time investment in destination awareness marketing provides a step forward to elevate the awareness and image of our state to attract and recruit people to North Dakota for a vitally needed workforce within the hospitality industry.

The investing of \$50 million in the proposed Development Fund would be a catalyst for private growth within our industry, bringing forth new experiences, new attractions, and added wealth to our state.

The concept of the Destination Development Fund is not new to the ND Tourism Division. The ND Tourism Division administered the Tourism Infrastructure Grant Program during 2013 – 2017, with the similar objectives that also required criteria of a 1:1 private match. A few samples of projects that were awarded include:

- Sleepy Hollow – Bismarck
- Fargo Moorhead Curling Club – Fargo
- Dakota Territory Air Museum – Minot
- North Valley Arts Council – Grand Forks
- High Plains Cultural Center - Killdeer

The requests for funding were more than the small amount that was available.

Travel and tourism are important to our state. It touches many direct and indirect business sectors that make up this industry, giving back revenue and providing the opportunity to attract visitors that come to experience our state, and who are more likely to relocate to North Dakota.

Please support House Bill 1018.

Sincerely,

Terri Thiel
Executive Director

Dickinson Convention & Visitors Bureau

701-483-4988 | 800.279.7391 | 72 E. Museum Dr. | Dickinson, ND 58601

