

devils lake

Tourism

March 1, 2023

Senator Brad Bekkedahl
Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman
ND Senate – ND State Capitol
600 E. Boulevard Ave.
Bismarck, ND 58505

Dear Chairman Bekkedahl & Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of House Bill 1018, which includes the opportunity for enhanced funding for the Tourism Division, workforce marketing and the Destination Development Fund.

HB1018 funding provides the necessary tools to attract a critical need in our state for workforce and provide for the increased marketing visibility that has been needed for decades. The matching grant fund will support enhancements of exciting facilities and attractions and establish new amenities we need to attract visitors and turn them into residents. The tourism conversation is no longer just about “attractions” or “vacations” but is now about “attracting people to come see what our state has to offer in hopes they will stay.” We need to listen to the cries of our business community and help drive the message that North Dakota is a great place to live, work and play. We need the Destination Development Fund to provide amenities and we need more dollars to help drive the message across the nation about North Dakota.

It has been well-established that tourism marketing lifts the national and international image of our entire state, including the areas of economic and workforce development. People don't usually just decide to move to a new city or state for a job without seeing it first. We need the amenities and the attractions to help sway their decision to call North Dakota home and help drive individuals into the jobs we are so desperately needing. The team at the Tourism Division of the Department of Commerce does a fantastic job of promoting our image, let's give them the tools and funding they need to help all of our businesses and communities succeed.

I ask you to consider restoring the funding to the full \$50 million and \$25 million. Added partnerships through the Destination Development Fund will help create attractions and activities that motivate out-of-state travel, keep visitors in the state longer and aid in workforce recruitment and retention.

Respectfully,



Suzie Kenner
Executive Director