



EPIC Companies

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Chairman members of the O Appropriations #

For the record, my name is Todd Berning and I am the President of EPIC Companies. EPIC Companies is an investment, development, and management firm based out of West Fargo and Minot ND. We take underutilized spaces and build mixed-use buildings that provide a better quality of life for the communities we invest in. Today, on behalf of our 85 employees, I offer testimony in support of House Bill 1018 and the proposed destination development fund.

With the proposed \$50,000,000 investment in destination development funds, organizations like ours will be able to further expand the aspects of our developments. These unique spaces like the Lights in West Fargo have become known as regional attractions and address the specific needs of the communities we work in. Over the years, we have spent our time and talents to redevelop many communities throughout North Dakota. We have over 30+ mixed-use buildings that contain commercial space, apartments, and condos with some that feature world class public attractions.

Some of the notable plaza developments that our team has built and continue to manage are The Lights in West Fargo, POW/MIA Plaza in West Fargo, The Beacon under construction in Grand Forks, and The Tracks under construction in Minot. Each of these has a transformable space that can host events year-round creating unique destinations that generate significant tourism traffic and are amenities for North Dakota residents. We have also fostered unique experiences by being extremely supportive of local theaters, the arts and music communities, and by adding artists to our staff. Attractions like the Lights in West Fargo increase tourism by hosting art events, theater productions, and numerous concerts.

Including the destination development funds in HB 1018 would allow our team and the private investment we generate to continue to create truly unique experiences for visitors and residents alike. We have seen the transformative change in the areas we have created these regional attractions and know the impact these amenities have on workforce recruitment, tourism spending, and retaining our youth.

On behalf of the EPIC team, I would like to thank the committee for their time and consideration and ask for a "do pass" for the destination development funds along with a push to keep the amount at the originally proposed \$50,000,000.

Sincerely,

Todd Berning, President

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