



**Testimony of Dana Hager
Economic Development Association of North Dakota
In Support of HB 1266
March 7, 2023**

Chair Kannianen and members of the Senate Finance and Taxation Committee:

I am Dana Hager, executive director of the Economic Development Association of North Dakota (EDND). On behalf of EDND, I would like to express our support for HB 1266 relating to projects and reapplication for Renaissance Zone designation.

EDND represents more than 80 state economic development organizations on the front line of economic development efforts throughout North Dakota. The organization primarily aims to promote new wealth creation throughout North Dakota to develop more vibrant and efficient communities and improve quality of life.

The Renaissance Zone program is a unique economic development tool encouraging investment in downtown and other blighted properties. It attracts development, various businesses and housing to these underutilized areas of our communities. Redevelopment projects in downtowns are often more expensive than new development projects of similar square footage, thus making these older areas of our communities less attractive to developers. The Renaissance Zone tax incentive serves as an essential tool for communities.

Currently, if a city does not apply for an extension, the zone will expire and there is no mechanism to renew an expired zone status. A new or reestablished Renaissance Zone may not be approved in that city. HB 1266 will allow a city to reapply for a subsequent Renaissance Zone after expiration. This is a smart solution and an excellent opportunity to strengthen and increase community development in North Dakota communities.

Thank you for taking the time to examine renaissance zones and help them remain a valuable incentive in our communities. I urge the committee's support of HB 1266. Thank you.