



**Testimony of Rudie Martinson
Executive Director of the North Dakota Hospitality Association
Before the Senate Finance and Taxation Committee
January 25, 2023**

Chairman Kannianen and members of the Senate Finance and Taxation Committee,

My name is Rudie Martinson, and I submit my testimony today in my capacity as Executive Director of the North Dakota Hospitality Association. The ND Hospitality Association is the trade association for our state's restaurant, lodging, and retail beverage industries.

We stand in support of our fellow retail business to urge a "Do Pass" motion on HB 2217. Our bars, restaurants, and hotels act as a tax collecting agent for the state whenever we swipe a card, and pay the swipe fee for the tax collected, on top of the cost of services rendered or goods sold. This bill seeks to remove the state and local tax collected on transactions from the swipe fee – effectively eliminating an added cost incurred by our members paid to credit card companies for our members collecting and remitting this tax.

As you know, the past three years have been uniquely challenging for all sectors of business, and particularly so for businesses in the hospitality industry. This bill will provide relief from an undue and unintentional burden.

Restaurants, hotels, and bars are cornerstones of the social fabric of our communities. We host anniversary and graduation dinners, big conferences that became a turning point in your career, and provide the time and environment you need to wind down after a tough day at work. We ask that you give this bill favorable consideration, so we do not have to continue to pay an additional fee to private companies because we dutifully assist the state and local governments in collecting taxes.

On behalf of the North Dakota Hospitality Association and the restaurant, lodging, and retail beverage industries, I urge a "Do Pass" vote.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rudie Martinson
Executive Director
North Dakota Hospitality Association