



**Testimony of Matt Marshall
Economic Development Association of North Dakota
In Support of SB 2391
February 1, 2023**

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

I am Matt Marshall, economic development administrator for Minnkota Power Cooperative and secretary/treasurer for the Economic Development Association of North Dakota (EDND). I want to express our support for SB 2391 regarding income and property tax incentives for Renaissance Zones.

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

Strengthening and increasing community development programs is a priority for EDND. Healthy and vibrant communities are essential in attracting talent and future workforce to live and work in North Dakota. EDND supports effective tools and programs, such as Renaissance Zones, to attract development and improve the quality of life in North Dakota communities.

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

EDND supports allowing two exemptions to the continuous boundary and block requirements allowing additional three block areas. Communities could use the additional island(s) to increase investment in housing and commercial buildings that may not be attached to the downtown area but still need investment to prevent slums and blight. Preserving additional sections will enhance the vitality and livability of our cities. In addition, supporting projects outside the urban core that meet the community vision and objectives of the Renaissance Zone will attract additional private investment and offer the same incentive options as those projects within the existing zone.

Thank you for taking the time to examine Renaissance Zones and helping provide additional opportunities through this valuable incentive. The program changes in this bill are positive, and I urge the committee's support for SB 2391. Thank you.