



Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee – SB 2161

Senator Dale Patten, Chair

January 19, 2023

Chairman Patten, Members of the Committee:

My name is Brian Ritter and I'm the President & CEO of the Bismarck Mandan Chamber EDC. Please accept the following testimony on behalf of our organization's more than 1,200 business members in support of SB 2161.

Bismarck-Mandan's economy is built upon a diverse number of industries, including: government, healthcare, education and energy. For at least two generations, Bismarck-Mandan residents have commuted to surrounding coal mines, power plants and other energy-related employers. In addition, our community is home to the headquarters for energy generation companies like Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Montana-Dakota Utilities Company.

However, the energy industry is changing in the face of a number of environmental, societal and governmental factors. In order to ensure that our energy producers can not only adapt, but thrive in the future, we must do all that we can to support research and development efforts that will lead to the next generation of energy generation projects. The funding for the State's research center at the Energy & Environmental Research Center (EERC) will do just that.

As such, I would respectfully ask that the Committee give a DO PASS recommendation to SB 2161.