Representative Jared Hendrix
House District 10
Testimony for HCR 3026

Chair Mike Beltz & Members of the House Agriculture Committee,

The United States has had a long-standing strategic interest in Greenland, beginning in 1868 when Secretary of State William H. Seward explored purchasing it alongside Iceland. Although the U.S. renounced claims to Greenland in 1916 as part of the purchase of the Danish West Indies, World War II renewed American involvement when Denmark allowed U.S. forces to occupy and defend Greenland in 1941. After the war, the U.S. offered to buy Greenland for $100 million in gold in 1946, but Denmark refused. In 1951, Denmark permitted the establishment of Thule Air Base, solidifying Greenland's role in U.S. defense strategy during the Cold War. Interest resurfaced in 2019 when President Trump proposed buying Greenland, an idea rejected by both Greenland and Denmark. But we should not give up so easily.

Greenland is rich in natural resources, including rare earth elements (REEs) and other critical minerals such as zinc, copper, nickel, cobalt, platinum, lithium, and graphite, which are essential for energy technologies and advanced manufacturing. It has deposits of precious metals like gold and silver, as well as industrial minerals such as coal, iron ore, and uranium. Its vast ice sheet contains approximately 20% of the worlds fresh water, making it a potential resource as global water demand rises. Greenland is estimated to have up to 42 million metric tons of rare earth oxides (REOs), potentially representing about 48% of global reserves. These oxides are necessary in electronics, ceramics, glass manufacturing, phosphors, lasers, and catalysts due to their unique optical and magnetic properties. Additionally, 12.1 million metric tons of titanium deposits are crucial for clean energy technologies and lightweight materials used in aerospace and construction. Its 57.1 million metric tons of zirconium can be used in jewelry, alloys and nuclear power. Aluminium and gallium also play key roles in solar panels and wind turbines. Platinum group metals are used in industrial applications such as gas turbines and jet engines. It also has an estimated 17.5 billion barrels of oil and 148 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

Scientifically, Greenland is invaluable for climate research and glaciology. Technological advancements that adapt to extreme conditions are potentially applicable to space exploration and can foster international collaboration. Launching satellites closer to the North Pole can be more effective for certain missions. Polar orbits can benefit Earth observation, weather monitoring, and communication services.

Summer Arctic sea ice is shrinking by 13% per decade. While we do not know yet how long this trend will continue or how cyclical it may be, in the near term this dramatic change is elevating Greenland's strategic importance for both naval operations and commercial shipping. Economically, Greenland is a pivotal location along emerging trans-Arctic shipping routes, including the Northwest Passage and the Transpolar Sea Route, which could revolutionize global maritime trade by offering shorter alternatives to traditional shipping lanes. Militarily, Greenland's significance is amplified by its hosting of crucial facilities like Thule Space Base and its position within the strategically important GIUK Gap. Expanding our presence would enhance missile defense, space surveillance, and monitoring of trans-Arctic shipping routes.

Greenlands resources will become more and more indispensable for battery production, particularly in electric vehicles (EVs) and energy storage systems. As we look towards inevitable technological shifts, and consider needs for existing industries, it is clear that Greenland will play a significant role in the decades and even centuries to come. It is reasonable to assume that other nations will increasingly seek to access Greenland's resources and may employ more aggressive means over time as global resources diminish. Russia, China, and the European Union have all shown interest. With growing competition in the Arctic among global powers, coupled with increasing tensions, it's likely that nations will employ economic investments, diplomatic pressure or potentially more assertive measures to secure these resources and strategic advantages in the coming decades.

Greenland currently functions as an autonomous country within the Kingdom of Denmark, with its own parliament and government. The Greenlandic people have shown a strong desire for self-determination, as evidenced by the 2009 Self-Government Act, which provides a legal pathway to independence. While Greenlanders have not expressed willingness for U.S. annexation, they might reconsider if presented with a compelling case for mutual benefits, such as

significant economic development, improved infrastructure, and enhanced security, while preserving their cultural autonomy and political representation.

Economically, developing Greenland's resources could benefit both Greenlanders and Americans. Annexation would secure U.S. interests in the Arctic, as a counter to Chinese and Russian influence. Greenland's potential resource wealth directly impacts North Dakota's aerospace and other manufacturing. Greenland's glacial rock dust could revitalize depleted soils and North Dakota's agricultural sector could benefit from accessing this resource and developing technologies around its application and distribution.

While seemingly unconventional, HCR 3026 sends a proactive message aligned with both North Dakota's and the United Statess economic interests and national security concerns. This resolution signals North Dakota's leadership and foresight in anticipating future resource scarcity and advocating for a proactive approach to secure access to vital materials. Decreasing reliance on foreign entities, particularly China, bolsters national security and economic independence. While recognizing the unusual nature of a state legislature calling for the annexation of foreign territory, this resolution is in our best interest, and passing it will advocate a position of national leadership on the topic.