

Do Not Pass Testimony

January 9, 2025

on HB 1038

Dear Chairman Vigesaa and members of the House Appropriations Committee,

I am asking for a Do Not Pass on HB 1038. This legislation does not serve the North Dakota citizen for the following reasons:

1. The taxpayer should not fund the previous mistakes of replacing equipment containing Chinese components.
2. The North Dakota Commerce Department has funneled large amounts of money into a likely illegal technology operation in Dunseith, ND. Why send more good money after bad?
3. While taxpayers are struggling to make ends meet due to inflation, they are funding drones that do not add to their bottom line.
4. The drones will ostensibly be used to assist first responders in apprehending criminals. However, the criminals are not currently being arrested now due to lack of prison space. Should we first not use the \$15 million and \$11 million to build prison capacity that we do not have now? We have no prison space. Why apprehend even more criminals that we can't incarcerate? Use the money to build prisons.
5. The regularity of funding drone projects every legislative session and special session is excessive. It points to special relationships no one else enjoys.
6. When canvassing, the people are telling the politicians they need property tax reform, not that they need more drones.

Please give HB 1038 a Do Not Pass.

Respectfully,

Robert Costello