

Written Testimony in Support of: HB 1570

Date of Hearing: February 12

Shilo Virginia Previti, Policy Lead with Blue Zones Project Grand Forks

Committee Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Shilo Previti. I am a resident of Grand Forks, ND. I am in support of this bill HB 1570 because it will help to decrease the risk of lung cancer, heart disease, COPD, especially for the youth in our state.

The American Lung Association, Cancer Association and Heart Association all support this bill because it aligns with best practices to include nicotine pouches in the definition of alternative tobacco products and increase the tax ratio on commercial tobacco products in order to raise revenue while simultaneously reducing health care cost throughout the state and improving health and well-being for all residents, including youth.

Here are some additional data points I find particularly compelling, which have motivated me to submit testimony in favor of this bill:

- At only \$.44 per pack, North Dakota's tax on cigarettes is 49th in the country and much lower than the average state cigarette tax at \$1.97 per pack.
- North Dakota has not raised the tax on cigarettes since 1993, and electronic nicotine products are not currently included in ND's excise tax structure.
- 13.3% of ND adults currently smoke cigarettes and 18.2% of ND high schoolers currently use Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems.
- ND's annual tobacco excise tax revenue is only approximately \$23M, while ND's tobacco-related Medicaid expenditures alone costs ND taxpayers over \$61M.

In closing, I urge you to recommend a **do pass** on HB 1570.

Thank you for your time, Committee Chair and members of the committee.

Take care,

Shilo Virginia Previti