

**Testimony of Cole Higlin
North Dakota Recreation & Park Association
To House Government & Veterans Affairs Committee
In Support to HB 1445
Friday, February 7, 2025**

Chairman Schauer and members of the Committee, my name is Cole Higlin, and I am the public policy chair of the North Dakota Recreation & Park Association (NDRPA). We represent more than 900 members, primarily park districts, and work to advance parks, recreation and conservation for an enhanced quality of life in North Dakota.

On behalf of North Dakota's park districts, I express support for House Bill 1445, which amends the procurement threshold for architectural and engineering services related to public improvements.

HB 1445 proposes an increase in the threshold for procuring plans, drawings and specifications from an architect or engineer for pre-engineered structures, raising the limit from \$200,000 to \$1 million. This change will apply to pre-engineered buildings, which are designed and reviewed by engineers before manufacturing to ensure they comply with building codes and project requirements. For other types of public improvements, the procurement threshold remains at \$200,000.

This bill would eliminate the unnecessary redundancy of requiring additional approvals from an architect or engineer for pre-engineered structures within the \$200,000 to \$1 million range. Such structures are already thoroughly vetted and stamped by engineers prior to fabrication, reducing the need for further review when the designs are within the specified cost range.

As park districts manage public spaces, recreational facilities, and community centers—often with constrained budgets—HB 1445 provides much-needed flexibility. By allowing park districts to more easily manage pre-engineered projects, the bill helps to streamline construction processes, saving time and resources.

HB 1445 would enhance the efficiency of public projects, supporting the ongoing development of North Dakota's communities. I strongly urge you to pass this bill, which will help park districts and local governments manage resources more effectively while fostering growth in public infrastructure. Thank you for the opportunity to express our support.