

January 20, 2025

To: House Industry, Business, and Labor Committee

From: Janet Brandau

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Greetings! I'm writing to you in support of House Bill no. 1438. I live in Moorhead, Minnesota, and came to the Fargo-Moorhead area decades ago for higher education. While a graduate student in Theatre Arts at NDSU I became familiar with the Fargo Theatre and their scope of offerings. After graduation I moved away to teach for ten years, and then moved back and have been here since. When I returned to this area I became involved as a volunteer at the Fargo Theatre and the Fargo Film Festival (over 15 years now) and I am a regular donor. I'm so proud of the breadth of programming the Fargo Theatre provides for our region, and the many people who are impacted by its offerings.

Maintaining this historic landmark provides us with a continuum through time, not only in the beauty of the structure itself, but in the history of the programming and the evolution of the technology needed to provide that programming. While there are movie theatres in many locations, historic venues like this are rare. Preserving the state's cultural heritage is an important and appropriate function for the legislature. Such places tell people who *we* are. The Fargo Theatre's programming tells people of all ages that they are welcome here. That there is a place offering a multitude of kinds of programming reflecting the region and the world. That our history is valued and we honor it while we preserve it for the future.

The return on investment in preserving this theatre is solid. It will continue to attract both residents and tourists to downtown and the broader region. It will continue to support the arts, entertainment, education, and the world of film through its programming. As a non-profit, the Fargo Theatre relies not only on ticket revenue but on the support of donors. The public-private model for this funding is a positive, demonstrating wide support for this iconic North Dakota landmark.

Thank you for considering this bill. I strongly encourage you to vote in favor of this investment. North Dakota's history and culture are important- this a rare moment in time (with the theatre's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary approaching) to commit to preservation of a treasure and to launch it into its next 100 years. Thank you for reading and thank you for your support.