

1 **TESTIMONY OF DAVID HOGUE IN SUPPORT OF HB 1025**
2 **HOUSE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**
3 **COTEAU AB; 9:00 AM**
4 **January 16, 2025**

5
6 Good morning Chairman Porter and members of the House Energy and Natural
7 Resources Committee. My name is David Hogue. I am a North Dakota state senator
8 representing District 38, which includes northwest Minot and the city of Burlington. I
9 appear before your committee to seek support for House Bill 1025.

10 HB 1025 is a product of the interim Energy Development and Transmission
11 Committee ("EDT"). The EDT was given a full range of study subjects during the last
12 interim, including a broad directive to study the development of nuclear energy within
13 the state of North Dakota. As we began our study of all EDT's assigned studies, we
14 realized that the Committee could not fully devote the necessary time to adequately
15 study the potential for development of nuclear energy in the state of North Dakota. We
16 toured the Coal Creek plant owned and operated by Rainbow Energy near Center,
17 North Dakota. We visited the EERC in Grand Forks and reviewed the projects that the
18 EERC is working on. We also toured the Dakota Gasification plant owned by Basin
19 Electric. Finally, we arranged for a tour of Xcel's nuclear facility in Monticello,
20 Minnesota. The Xcel tour was a highly informative review of the facility and its
21 integration with the community of Monticello.

22 We came to a consensus that the study of nuclear energy must be on North
23 Dakota's energy development agenda and that the complexity and rigors of nuclear

1 energy development required a study all its own that should be on-going, akin to other
2 standing interim committees, such as the Water Topics Overview Committee.

3 One question that may arise with this proposal is why now? Why study the
4 development of nuclear energy in North Dakota? We have abundant (but not infinite)
5 supplies of coal, natural gas to generate electricity well into the 21st century.
6 Furthermore, nuclear energy is considerably more expensive than coal generation or
7 natural gas generation, so what's the point?

8 Well, I would ask a counterquestion: we don't know when the war on coal will end
9 nor what the outcome will be. We do know there are consistent efforts in Europe, the
10 West, and other locations to decarbonize electricity generation. We also know that our
11 base load power demand is expanding at unprecedented rates. I have visited with one
12 electric distribution cooperative in the northwest quadrant of our state who informs that
13 its baseload demand has doubled in the last ten years and the distribution cooperative
14 expects another doubling in the next ten years. I've also seen a report that electricity
15 energy demand will increase six times faster than overall energy demand.

16 Spending by tech giants on AI is also contributing to rising energy demand.
17 Some data centers are consuming as much energy as nuclear power plants generate.

18 We often are told that China continues to make massive investment in coal fired
19 generation plants, so why should the United States unilaterally "disarm" from coal fired
20 generation. But the truth is China is pursuing an "all of the above" energy policy. Of the
21 60 nuclear plants under construction around the world today, 45 of them are in China.
22 All of these include the so-called "fourth generation" nuclear reactors, those that avoid

1 use of long fuel rods and cope with extremely high temperatures without melting. China
2 strategy is to reduce its dependence on imported oil and natural gas.

3 As many of you know, big tech is bringing nuclear power back to prominence as
4 well. Microsoft will spend \$ 1.6 billion to bring a Three Mile Island nuclear reactor back
5 on line and purchase its power for 20 years. Microsoft expect to consume 6 times the
6 electricity is projected in 2020.

7 Of course, the Vogtle nuclear plant in Georgia gives the industry pause. That
8 reactor cost \$35 billion, more than double the initial estimate. That, one expects, is an
9 anomaly related to the absence of efficient manufacturing and construction processes.

10 In Wyoming, Terra Power, an SMR startup backed by Bill Gates, has broken
11 ground on its first plant in Wyoming in August of 2024. There are more SMRs planned
12 or under construction in the United States than anywhere else in the world, owing in
13 large measure to the tech industry.

14 Chairman Porter and committee members, I urge a do pass recommendation on
15 HB 1025.