

Chairman Porter, members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, for the record, Brenna Jessen – Grants Officer and Fiscal Manager for the ND Industrial Commission, and I have the pleasure of having the Outdoor Heritage Fund in my portfolio where I assist the Chairman in facilitating the board meetings and see the grants through from start to finish.

The Industrial Commission holds a favorable position in the addition of the Department of Water Resources to the OHF non-voting technical committee. There are many applications that have various water components whose applicants are also trying to secure funds from the Department of Water Resources, and because an applicant cannot use other State general fund dollars as local match, having a member of the Department of Water Resources on the technical committee would allow for better communication and transparency between the departments.

The Industrial Commission is also requesting, and in favor of, adjusting the current language for the Outdoor Heritage Fund quorum requirements. Currently, a majority of board members is required for a proposal to be sent to the Industrial Commission, which would be 7/12 members voting in favor. Because the Outdoor Heritage Fund board consists of members from different backgrounds and industries, it can be very challenging to find a meeting date that works for every board member, which in turn has led to some voting issues. For example, in our last two grant rounds, there were a handful of grant applications that received favorable votes from the majority of those members present – so 6 members voting yes out of the 10 members that were present - But due to current language and those proposals not receiving the 7 votes necessary, the projects could not move forward.

The other grant programs under the Industrial Commission, including the Clean Sustainable Energy Authority, Renewable Energy Council, Oil and Gas Research Council, and the Lignite Energy Council all require the majority of voting members PRESENT to vote favorably for an application to be able to move forward to the Industrial Commission. So, we ask that the Outdoor Heritage Fund be treated the same way as those other grant programs. This concludes my testimony for HB 1554 and I will stand for any questions you may have.

Brenna Jessen

Grants Officer and Fiscal Manager

ND Industrial Commission